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HEARTS UNDAUNTED

Books by
ELEANOR ATKINSON
HEARTS UNDAUNTED
JOHNNY APPLESEED
GREYFRIARS BOBBY

HARPER & BROTHERS, NEW YORK



[See page 123

**MOUNTED ON HIS BIG WHITE HORSE, HERON-PLUMED AND DRAPED
IN A GOLD-LACED BLANKET, WITH NELLY ON HER
LONG-TAILED PONY BESIDE HIM**

HEARTS UNDAUNTED

*A Romance of
Four Frontiers*

BY
ELEANOR ATKINSON
AUTHOR OF
"GREYFRIARS BOBBY" "JOHNNY APPLESKEW"

ILLUSTRATED



**HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS
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TO THE MEMORY OF
“LITTLE SHIP UNDER FULL SAIL”
THE WIFE OF
JOHN KINZIE
“FATHER OF CHICAGO”

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I

AT OLD FORT PITT

ON the summer morning of 1772 when the last sunrise gun was fired from Fort Pitt by a British garrison, Capt. William Lytle, late of the Virginia Militia, rose at dawn from a bed in which he had been unable to sleep. He was only a year or so over thirty, but his face looked old and gray when he opened the door of his big, sprawling house of hewn logs, which stood on the east bank of the Alleghany River, and looked abroad over his green meadows and corn-fields. Their harvests would ripen to no profit. His scheme of life had crumbled into dust.

Fort Pitt was a monument to the years of

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his youth that Captain Lytle had given to the service of his king and his colony in the wilderness. And this military grant of land, three miles above the fort, and the privilege of supplying the garrison with corn, cattle and horses, had been his reward. Five years before, in the flush of youth and love and prospering fortunes, he had brought the inheritance of a younger son, which included a half-dozen slaves, to this wild and beautiful domain, and begun to clear a plantation out of his wooded hills and bottom-lands. Waiting only until the most necessary buildings were up, and a hundred acres had been fenced, he had gone back to Baltimore on horseback, attended by his black boy, Sam, like any planter of the tide-water, and fetched home his bride.

A gently bred and timorous maid of sixteen, he had warned her that her dwelling would be rude, but had reassured her as to other matters. With the Delaware Indians of the region Pennsylvania had lived in peace for nearly a hundred years. The Senecas of western New York and the Shawnees of Ohio would be kept in order by the fort that, after its capture from the French, had been rebuilt at a cost of sixty

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thousand pounds and garrisoned with a full regiment of British regulars.

Every comfort of living that could be brought into the country was to be had at the fort; and for society there were always half a hundred officers, married and single, and the family and numerous guests of Col. George Croghan. This sometime lieutenant, and emissary on many a distant and dangerous mission for Sir William Johnson, Superintendent of Indian Affairs among the Iroquois Six Nations of New York, had a lordly estate and trading-post at Redstone, a mile farther up the river.

"You will see," Captain Lytle had said to his bride. "Within one generation the Alleghany will be another Potomac."

Now the great fortress was to be dismantled and abandoned. Satisfied with the empire won from France, and weary of fighting the organized tribes of the West, England had made a peace with Pontiac that denied the charter rights of Virginia in the Ohio River Valley, and that left the farmers and traders long settled in western Pennsylvania to the privations and dangers of an unsupplied and undefended frontier.

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Captain Lytle did not deceive himself. Before this day was done his market and source of supplies, and even safety for his family, would have vanished up that bluff-bordered stream. Nevertheless, it was a day of ceremony at Fort Pitt, and he a gentleman of the Old Dominion, so he dressed himself with care. Sam shaved his face, tied his brown hair at the nape with a fresh ribbon, and buckled his shoes. Then he considered whether he should wear his good wedding-suit or his shabby old uniform—the blue broadcloth coat with scarlet facings and small clothes—of the Virginia Militia. He decided for the uniform, and set his cocked hat on his head at a defiant angle. As he took his sword and belt down from the wall he remarked to his young wife, with bitter humor, that he was going to Fort Pitt in state “to attend the funeral of my fortunes.”

He repented in a moment and kissed away her tears. His bitterness was for her, for the boy at her breast, and for the sprite of a little three-year-old daughter who lay asleep in her curtained corner of the loft chamber. He might be obliged to send them all back to Virginia or Baltimore to live in semi-dependence

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upon relations while he stayed here to fight for his broken-up home.

"Don't wake Nelly," he called back from the rustic piazza that was wreathed in wild morning-glories. "I can't take her with me. And tell that good-for-nothing Judy to hurry breakfast."

He was half-way down the path to the pier at the foot of the lawn when the wooden shutter, which closed a small window in the gable, opened with a clatter. The echoing report of the sunrise gun had waked Nelly to another happy day. A little head all in a tangle of sunny curls, and an eager little face still rosy from sleep, popped out. Eleanor—"Nelly" for shortness and dearness—blew her father a kiss.

"I'll be weady in a minute, daddy. I'll sit as still as mice in the canoe. Deedy-deed I won't tip it over." Then she dimpled and chuckled. "When I did tumble into the water I just got wet."

"Yes, and you got everybody else wet." He shook his head with smiling decision. Nelly never did sit or stand still one moment that she was awake. Unless there was an adult to give his whole mind to her, she was not to be trusted in a canoe.

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"Hurry, darling, and you may fetch father's new cedar paddles to the boat," he said, to console her.

Nelly loved to be busy in helpful little ways. The thought of life without that fairy maid, flitting about the forest clearing like a restless sunbeam, was not to be borne. He could hear her bare feet pattering over the loose boards of the puncheon floor. She would soon have on her moccasins and blue linsey frock, without anybody's help, and come scrambling down the ladder stairs like a squirrel.

Preoccupied with his problems, Captain Lytle paid no attention to her as she ran between the house and the boat on errands of her own invention. She was such a robust, fearless child, full of energy and gaiety, that it was surprising to find in her the tender beauty of her fragile and wistful mother. Afterward—oh, for long, long afterward—for a lifetime of anguish crowded into the decade while she was growing up, Captain Lytle knew that all his troubles of that morning were as nothing beside the fact that Nelly did go down to Fort Pitt that morning, after all. He was in the big canoe, with paddle poised, and Sam was making ready to

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push the boat off and jump in, when Colonel Croghan appeared on the river trail. An Irish gentleman, with the portly figure, red face and gray hair of late middle age and good living, he wore the uniform of a colonel in the British army, although long retired from active service.

It pleased him to-day to travel with a retinue of mounted guests, tenants and retainers. In the place of honor beside him, in green habit and plumed hat, rode Mrs. Guy Johnson, Sir William's dark-eyed daughter, who had recently married a cousin, who was her father's very able nephew and secretary. With waterways and trails open all the way to the Mohawk River, there was much visiting between Redstone and Johnson Hall.

"What's all this? Nelly not going—nor Mrs. Lytle?" For the colonel took in the situation at once with his shrewd and humorous eyes. Nelly stood like a culprit fay, with her finger in her mouth, and looking up through fringing lashes with eyes as blue as gentians, while her father commented on her talent for upsetting canoes.

"Well, it won't do, man; the garrison couldn't manage to get away without saying good-by

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to Nelly. That homesick young cub, Lieutenant McKillip, would disgrace the army by bursting into tears. He's as fine a lad as they breed in Scotland, and is not to be disappointed. This horse carries double, and I'll take Nelly on my saddle-bow. And, Mrs. Lytle, do you hop into the boat with Judy and the son and heir. We are furnishing the officers' mess to-day. Mrs. Croghan and the steward are going down with a boatload of provisions, so you are all to dine with us, al fresco, by the spring on Grant's Hill."

There was no denying that this genial Irishman had a way with him. He settled other people's affairs offhand, and he invited confidences. His wide knowledge of the country and of tribes out to the Mississippi gained by thirty years in trade war and forest diplomacy had made him a man to be consulted. Captain Lytle came to his stirrup with a half-formed project in his mind.

"If there's land to be had, I'm thinking of getting out of here and following the garrison to Niagara."

The colonel shook his head. "We own nothing there, not even the site of the fort. By treaty with the Six Nations we occupy the

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barren point on the east bank of the Niagara, at its junction with Lake Ontario, and a military road down to Lake Erie. The Senecas have their largest towns in the fertile valley of the Genesee, with corn-fields, cattle and orchards. It is their privilege to supply the fort and to do the carrying around Niagara Falls. They call themselves 'Keepers of the Western Door of the Long House of the Iroquois' and permit no encroachment by white people or by other Indian tribes. A band of them is likely to be down to Fort Pitt to-day to help with the loading." After a thoughtful moment he clapped his unlucky neighbor on the shoulder. His own lands were secured by an old Pennsylvania treaty with the Delawares, and his income was gained by trade. "Stick it out here, lad. Breed horses for the traders and the army. I could use a few more nags meself, and Sir William would buy anything with four legs that you could ride up to the Mohawk."

Nelly came flying out in a rosy-flowered dimity gown and a starched and frilled mob cap of white muslin. Her father swung her up to the saddle. As the colonel's big bay horse led the way into the sun-dappled forest path,

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her slippered feet began to drum in time to his easy canter.

"Nelly, mavourneen, this steed is liable to bolt with a fairy dancing on his neck." He pulled the ugly bonnet from the pretty head and crammed it into his pocket. Her hair had the pale color and sheen of corn silks. Years would mint it into pure gold. It fitted her crown like a satin cap, and then broke loose in curling locks that framed her face and fell to her neck.

"I know a green island far out in the say," the colonel sang, "and if I was a cintury or so younger, me dear, 'tis you and I would be going there. I'd show you a ring of shamrocks that bloomed where fairies danced on moonlight nights." In moments of relaxation this Dublin University man revived his delightful brogue, and for children he brought forth the fairy lore that had nourished his own youth.

"Oh, are there fairies?" Nelly's laugh bubbled up like water from a spring. She clasped her short arms as far as they would go around his ample chest. "Tell me another one, Croggy dear."

"Sure there are fairies and leprechauns and pixies and gnomes. There are nymphs and

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dryads, too, and faun with furry ears, and Pan with his pipes. They mostly live in the woods and waters, and never, by any chance, may people who do not believe in them get so much as a glimpse of those tricksy little folk." He had her peering into shadowy coves and listening to tinkling springs. Upon memory, learning and fancy he drew for Nelly's enchantment, never dreaming what mischief he might be doing to that child of ardent imagination and daring. "'Twas the Little People of the grane hills that left you, a changeling, in your lady mother's cradle."

She was all a little bundle of wonder and delight now, dancing from her eyes to her toes. The colonel turned to the bride, who was watching Nelly with a pensive smile.

"Here's blood for you, Madame Guy. Sir William ought to be having little men and maids like this in Johnson Hall, instead of Molly Brant and her half-breeds."

He could have bitten his tongue for that blunt speech, for the lady flushed and drew herself up. "I'll listen to nothing against my father's devoted Indian wife. She's the daughter and the sister of educated Mohawk chiefs, and a lady of heart, mind and proud spirit."

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"She's all that, I grant you," he admitted.
"Twould be a brave man who would flout Molly to her face. She rules in Johnson Hall like an admiral on the quarter-deck of his flag-ship. I gave her a bit of impudence once. She was only half my age, but she boxed my ears."

"Served you right." Madame Guy laughed merrily, but she presently fell into a thoughtful silence. The Mohawk princess who, since the age of sixteen, had been known as "the brown Lady Johnson," was, none the less, an Iroquois squaw. Sir William was in failing health. When he was gone Molly would take her children back to the wigwam. It was fortunate that her father had a white son to inherit, and his brilliant nephew, Guy, to take over his official duties.

For the rest of the journey they both devoted themselves to Nelly. At the edge of the forest the company scattered among the trees; and they all broke through together to the crest of Grant's Hill. From their feet fell away a landscape of wild beauty—of bluff-bordered streams, distantly circling heights, and the wide flood and billowing woods of Ohio.

II

THE HEART OF A SAVAGE

In that early day no town stood at this point. There were only a cluster of Delaware wigwams, the log stores and cabins of a score of traders along the gullied bank of the Monongahela and, in the fork of the rivers, the great fortress that has been a wilderness Gibraltar. It was still flanked with gardens and orchards; its whitewashed walls and buildings gleamed in the sun; the cross of St. George floated over the main gateway, and on the gun platform of a bastion the military band played lively airs.

Not for another quarter of a century were two thousand people gathered here again, and then it was no such strange and picturesque crowd as this. Nearly half were British soldiers. The boats of settlers, and of Delaware Indians who had come in from their island fisheries and corn-

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fields, lined the bank of the Alleghany for a mile. Shawnees in paint and eagle feathers had crossed from Ohio; and when he had unstrapped his field-glass the colonel discovered a band of tall, half-naked braves, each with the white heron feather of the New York lakes in his beaded head-band. Stripped to their breech cloths, and in sleeveless shirts of buckskin, they stood in the water, straining to get a piece of heavy ordnance onto a barge.

"That is a band of Senecas," he said. The glass passed from hand to hand. "With the carrying at the portages from Lake Chataqua to Lake Erie and around Niagara Falls they will make enough to keep them in gunpowder and war-paint for a year."

"And fire-water," some one added, dryly.

"Not this band," corrected Guy Johnson. "It is led by Gar-yan-wah-ga, the Cornplanter. See him at the end of the pier, directing the work of his braves. He wears a cap-like crown of dyed and tufted heron plumes. Cornplanter is a teetotaler. I've heard him deliver a temperance lecture to his tribe that made me turn down my glass at dinner for a month."

Captain Lytle had beached his canoe above

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the crowd, and now he fetched his wife up to their friends on the hill-crest. As soon as Mrs. Lytle had assured herself that Nelly was safe, and had disposed Judy and the baby under a tree, Colonel Croghan recovered the field-glass for her and pointed out the interesting war chief.

"He looks so ferocious, and at least seven feet high!" She turned pale, for Cornplanter was a sinister figure, a symbol of everything of menace on this now undefended border.

"Six feet four, I believe. He measured once with Colonel Washington, the only Virginian he condescends to admire. Singular, but he was born in the same year—about forty now, and a confirmed bachelor. He treats his mother like a queen; and there is said to be a little sister to whom he is quite romantically devoted. He makes his tribe plant two hundred acres of corn at his big village on the Genesee. 'Plenty corn, plenty war' is his favorite adage."

The group had been seen and saluted by officers on the river-bank, and Lieut. Daniel McKillip was detailed to escort the garrison ladies up the hill. He lifted Nelly from the saddle, and held her soft little wriggling body in his arms for a moment. A shy youth of

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eighteen, he blushed when Mrs. Lytle spoke to him.

"We are so sorry to lose you, Danny." With a little fussing around Nelly's disordered frock she gave him time to swallow the lump in his throat, and she used his military title to brace him: "Where do you go now, Lieutenant—what post?" The garrison was to proceed to Niagara, and from there be distributed among northern frontier posts all the way from Montreal to Mackinac.

"I don't know, Mrs. Lytle. Something was said about Detroit."

He had to go back to his work of directing a squad of soldiers about the proper loading of a bateau. Mrs. Lytle watched him until he was lost in the crowd. Her house had been a home to him in a land of exile, and in these wilds friends were few and precious. When her eyes had cleared of mist she took the field-glass again. Suddenly she gasped in half-frightened amazement. The heat of the mounting sun becoming oppressive, Cornplanter had dropped his blanket, disclosing the scarlet coat, gold braid and epaulets, and the jewel-hilted sword of a British officer of high rank. He stood out with startling

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effect, for all soldiers except the commanding officer of the fort were in pioneer garb for the rough work of the day. It was a hushed group which closed around Colonel Croghan to hear the barbaric tale.

"Cornplanter was a young warrior of twenty-one or two when he got that outfit on the field of Braddock's defeat. Most of the Iroquois were with the British, but bands of Senecas fought with the French. He lay in ambush to pick off an officer of near his own size. He has the scalp, too, pale brown as a hazelnut, and tied at the nape with a black ribbon. That exploit made him a chief. Hundreds of braves will follow him on any expedition."

Guy Johnson was red with anger. "I've heard that story before, but Cornplanter has never dared wear that uniform at the grand councils or at Johnson Hall. He's an impudent scoundrel to wear it here. It's exciting the Shawnees."

The Ohio Indians were weaponless, but they suddenly raced to the parade-ground and whirled into a war-dance. A squad of soldiers had to be sent to scatter them. Cornplanter was apparently unconscious of the sensation he

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had created, but Guy Johnson was not deceived. "The Senecas are treacherous. They took up the bloody belt of Pontiac, and it is really they who have forced us out of Fort Pitt. It's quite on the cards that they could make things uncomfortable for us at Niagara and cut us off from the western posts.

"Cool off!" Colonel Croghan shouted, so that the ladies who had fled to the edge of the forest with the children could hear him. "'Tis nothing but vanity. The vainest animal that walks on two legs is an Iroquois warrior. He's been posing all the marning like a Roman sinator on a London stage." He had them all laughing now, and his witty Irish tongue betrayed him into another gibe. "If ye are spoiling for a foight, Guy, 'tis Captain Lytle that's insulting ye. He wore his ould uniform to sarve notice on us Tories that Virginians will come back and take this fort wheniver they get ready."

"That's right!" Captain Lytle admitted promptly. He realized what had been at the back of his mind in deciding to wear his uniform. His eyes narrowed, and his pale jaw was set in a grim line. "We took this fort once for his Majesty, and now his rascally Govern-

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ment has betrayed us. If we need it to defend our homes we'll use it."

The colonel threw up his hands in mock despair. "Well, let us be merry, for to-morrow we'll all be at one another's throats."

To his dismay, no one laughed with him. The social atmosphere had become so strained that the party broke up into small groups and scattered. This sunny slope of wide, enchanting view had been used for a picnic-ground since the earliest days of old Fort DuQuesne, and a wild apple-tree, grown from a discarded core, shaded the spring by the Indian trail. Mrs. Guy Johnson sat under it to weave a chaplet of white clover for Nelly's head, and Nelly flitted about in the rank grass, hunting for blossoms with long stems.

"Guy, come here, dear," the bride called, softly. "You do look so hot and cross. See my sweet little playmate. Let's kidnap Nelly and carry her away to Johnson Hall." She dimpled with mischief, but after a moment she sighed. "I can't imagine her there, after all, with Molly's rough brood."

"That would be all right. Nelly isn't proud. The colonel says she's hand in glove with half

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the Delawares of the region. She'd be happy in a wigwam."

"Don't suggest such a thing! Poor Mrs. Lytle is as white as a ghost with that insolent savage swaggering around."

Guy Johnson lay on the grass and pulled his hat over his eyes, that he might think undisturbed. He was not here in an official capacity, but there would be much to report to his illustrious uncle. The evacuation of Fort Pitt was a piece of amazing stupidity on the part of the English Government. Sir William had protested against it in vain, and had succeeded in delaying it for four years. A garrison was needed here to restrain both the red tribes and reckless white squatters. Colonel Croghan had gone to the heart of the matter. British, Indians, and Colonials might soon be at one another's throats.

When Nelly came running with the skirt of her little gown full of blossoms Madame Guy fitted the wreath to her head. "I want to make one for you. Show me how, please." Nelly always wanted to do things for herself. Her nimble little fingers soon learned the trick of weaving the stems. For an hour she sat

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there, as busy as any honey-bee at her charming task.

When servants had laid linen on the grass and spread the feast, quite threescore officers of all degrees came up the hill. They could spare only an hour to drink merry toasts, eat the picnic lunch, and say farewell to old friends. Then the trumpet was blown to call every one to the parade-ground, to hear the reading of the royal proclamation which extended the boundaries of Quebec and the Indian country under Canadian jurisdiction down to the Alleghany and Ohio rivers. As soon as the soldiers had marched out to a lively air, and the flag was hauled down, the visiting braves swarmed into the deserted fort with yells that echoed from the woods and bluffs.

The soldiers, and the Seneca braves not needed in the boats, crossed the river to begin the long march up through the woods to the portage at Lake Chatauqua. In mid-afternoon the business of launching the fleet of laden canoes, bateaux and barges was begun. As soon as his boat was loaded Lieutenant McKillip came to take Nelly over the fort. He had something delightful to show her. Swinging her up to his

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shoulder above the press, he skirted the crowd and crossed the parade-ground and the draw-bridge over the dry moat.

The Indians were gone, taking with them such souvenirs as they could pry loose. But traders were bargaining with the sutler for heaps of bricks, timbers, old iron and nails from wrecked barracks and gun platforms, and Colonel Croghan's steward was buying odds and ends of dressed lumber, cut stone, glass and hardware, for the embellishment of Redstone. Captain Lytle was there, too, and pale with rage.

"Vultures! Picking the bones of the dead fort! Not even a sentry is to be left behind. I must see Arthur St. Clair and enlist a guard or it will all be carried away for fire-wood."

"In case of trouble you'll send Mrs. Lytle and the children back to Virginia?" the lieutenant asked, anxiously.

"If I can. Things happen quick sometimes. But there will be a refuge here, and supplies for a siege. Good by, Dan. We won't forget you."

"And I will not forget you, sir."

"Det-up! Det-up!" ordered Nelly. Danny was her horse for the time being, and she drove

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him hard over heaps of debris, and past empty buildings from which doors and windows had been stripped. He tramped up the outside stairs to the second floor of Colonel Boquet's strong little brick redoubt. And this is what he had brought Nelly to see:

Long used for a granary, the floor was strewn with grain. Wood-pigeons from the forest had found that treasure as soon as men's backs were turned. Through every opening, even through loopholes for guns under the timbered eaves, they flew in and out. They circled the roof in wheeling flights, and filled the dim place with cooing notes and fluttering wings.

For an hour Lieutenant McKillip sat on the steps, watching Nelly's delight in the birds and filling his heart against a time of famine. This was his first year of exile from the glens and braes of Midlothian, and here his only friends in America. But he showed a cheerful face to the little maid, and joked about taking her with him on that long, wild journey in his pocket.

"You tan't!" Nelly tried, and only one foot at a time would go into his pocket comfortably.

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"Then I'll take you in my heart. Plenty of room there."

Something in his voice or look made the child throw her arms around his neck and kiss him with innocent fervor. "I love you, Danny, bushels and bushels," she said.

A bugle blew for stragglers. To the valiant tune of "The Campbells Are Coming," that the lieutenant whistled as bravely as a bagpipe, he raced with her across the fort and down to the pier. There he brought forth, diffidently, a beautifully beaded Indian pouch, and in it a prayer-book, bound in white vellum, for Nelly. He jumped into the last boat. The colors were unfurled from the flag-ship and the rude fleet moved up the river, paddle, oar and pole keeping time to the mournful refrain of "Lochaber No More."

Chief Cornplanter stood on the bank, his bodyguard of young braves in a canoe at his feet. With the keenest intelligence he watched to the last detail of what was, in truth, a state ceremony. Great Britain in the wilderness omitted nothing of ancient rite that would impress the tribes. Perhaps, too, he was using the opportunity to estimate the number and re-

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sources of the settlers left in the region, for his glance swept the crowd of spectators gathered along the terraced bank.

A Delaware who had been waiting to lay a tribute at the feet of this red hero made his way to him with a fine string of fish for the evening meal in camp. The Iroquois thrust him aside with a gesture of scorn and ferocity.

"Squaw, where is your petticoat?"

Colonel Croghan, who stood near, gave the humiliated Delaware a friendly clap on the back and a bit of silver, and bade a servant take the fish to his own boat. Cornplanter's contemptuous shrug was arrested midway by a dazzling vision. Nelly had been out to the end of the pier with her father to wave her hand to departing friends. Breaking from him with a gleeful laugh, she came running back like a mischievous elf.

"Whose papoose?" the chief asked, but before the colonel could reply he added: "Humph! Longknife's." He had recognized on Captain Lytle the uniform of an officer of the Virginia Militia. For that he had a special brand of animosity, but he did not indulge his feeling for it now. His face, that had been as impas-

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sive all day as though cast in bronze, softened to a smile as he watched the fairy-like little figure dancing fearlessly back along the narrow pier. Before any one realized his intention he had stooped and lifted Nelly to his arm. Her exquisite little face, the pearly rose of an apple blossom, was level with his own.

A moaning cry from Mrs. Lytle! The chief glanced at her with amused contempt. The captain heard it, turned, and raced back. Guy Johnson raised a warning finger. No man could measure the consequences of an insult to this lord of the lakes and forests of western New York.

Nelly was not in the least afraid. Indeed her eyes were wide with wonder and admiration of this gorgeous warrior—of his scarlet-and-gold coat, his regal head-dress of multi-colored heron plumes, his cable-like neck-chain and breast-plate of a gorget. The delicate little crescent and pendant of pearl shell which hung from the septum of his nose to the edge of his upper lip, fascinated her. A lock of her hair curling around his finger, he asked, in the best of English and with the most astonishing humility:

“One for me?”



CORNPLANTER HUNG A STRING OF WAMPUM AROUND NELLY'S NECK

THE HEART OF A SAVAGE

She shook the lock free. "No, I need them all on my head." But she was curious. "What for?"

"To feather an arrow for a charm. There are witches in the woods."

It was a red-letter day for Nelly—first fairies and then witches! "Show me a witch." There was a dimple and a smile for this entertaining person.

He turned his face, so that no one else heard. "Some day," he said, and after a moment: "My little sister went to the land of the Great Spirit. My lodge is lonely."

Nelly lifted her hand and touched his cheek. Now and then she lisped adorably: "I'm tho thorry! Maybe she'll come back."

He shook his head. A tremor ran through him. He seemed to feel the breathless silence and hostility of the crowd, for he looked around defiantly. Then, as though he had suddenly come to some resolution, he took a string of white-and-purple wampum from a pocket and hung it around Nelly's neck.

"Oh!" she cried. "Mother, may I keep the pretty beads?"

That ashen lady was speechless. Captain

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Lytle stood with one arm supporting her, and with fist and teeth clenched, under the steady-ing gaze of Guy Johnson and Colonel Croghan.

"Put me down, please," Nelly said, politely.

Again the chief turned his face. This time he whispered an Iroquois compound of caressing beauty: "Daya-danonda."

"Put me down. I want to go to mother." She struggled in his tightening grip. Her slipped feet kicked the nut-brown, ribboned scalp at his belt.

"Gar-yan-wah-ga," Guy Johnson spoke evenly, as one man to another, "put the child down. I am sure you do not wish to frighten her."

The chief seemed to come out of a trance. He let Nelly slip to the ground. As he stepped into the waiting canoe, Mrs. Lytle fainted in her husband's arms.

The setting sun flooded the Alleghany with golden light as the boats of the disheartened settlers went home, but the forest path was in twilight. Puzzled and troubled by the dramatic scene on the river-bank, Colonel Croghan dropped behind to question Nelly. Tired from the long, exciting day, she had curled in the

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curve of his arm like a kitten, to sleep, but he roused her.

"What did the chief say to you, mavourneen?"

"His little sister went away. She won't ever come back. He'll show me a witch some day."

"Yes, and when he put the beads around your neck?" They were not there now. Captain Lytle had broken the string and flung it into the river.

"Day—Daya—da—I don't 'member. I'm thleepy, Croggy dear."

His heart gave a leap of alarm. The dead sister; the lonely lodge; the string of wampum; Daya-danonda ("little sister"); and the promise of return "some day."

Under their eyes the Seneca war chief had adopted Nelly.

III

"LITTLE-SHIP-UNDER-FULL-SAIL"

WITH Mrs. Lytle ill from the shock, there was no chance to tell Nelly's father that night, and, as it happened, he was not warned at all. As soon as his wife was able to travel the captain took his family to Baltimore, and Colonel Croghan was away on some mission when they returned in the autumn of the next year. There was then a company of Virginia Militia in Fort Pitt, for the Old Dominion had reasserted her claim to the Ohio Valley.

In the spring a brief Indian war broke out on the Ohio River, after an unprovoked and savage attack was made on the defenseless wife and children of Logan by a party of reckless white squatters. An Iroquois of the Cayuga Nation, who had married a Shawnee squaw and become a chief in her tribe, Logan was widely known as

“LITTLE-SHIP-UNDER-SAIL”

“the white man’s friend.” The murder of his family was a criminal blunder. A man of fiery eloquence, his voice of grief and rage was heard in every Indian village from the Scioto to the Genesee.

Bands of Shawnees swept across the Alleghany with torch and tomahawk, and but for the intervention of Sir William Johnson the fury of the Senecas and Cayugas would have been loosed. Warning, then, that Nelly was marked for capture would have been of no use, for the old military road to the Potomac was unsafe for travelers. With the fort crowded with refugees, the best that Captain Lytle could do for his family was to set up a rude cabin of poles and bark in the garrison orchard.

Relying on Sir William’s promise of troops from Montreal to drive the trespassers out of Fort Pitt, and that all grievances should be adjusted at the Iroquois Grand Council to be held at Johnson Hall in July, the Senecas and Cayugas remained in their villages. But they were sullen and burning for revenge, for the Virginians used their weeks of respite from attack to send a flotilla of a hundred canoes down the Ohio. Captain Lytle commanded a company

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of volunteers. Within a month the Shawnees had been driven back to the Muskingum, and word was sent up the river that the victorious little army would be home in August.

While awaiting her husband's return, Mrs. Lytle helped the traders' wives care for the sick and wounded in the fort. Every sunny afternoon she lay under a favorite apple-tree in the orchard, within hearing of her children, who had a playhouse in a shady nook on the river-bank. On her fifth birthday Nelly was dressed in her best frock. It was only a washed-out brown linsey, but there was a faded ribbon for a sash, and into that her mother knotted the draw-strings of the beaded pouch which held the white vellum prayer-book. On special days Nelly always wore Lieutenant McKillip's gifts.

She was sure she remembered "Danny," for once in many months there was a letter from Detroit to keep his memory green. Mrs. Guy Johnson was a very real person to her, too, for that lady had sent her a French doll from Albany. And she was quite certain that there were fairies and witches, and some one in the world who knew all their woodland haunts. At the time she had confided to her mother the

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talks with Colonel Croghan and the Seneca war chief, but the two had become confused in her mind, and to Mrs. Lytle that sinister episode on the river-bank was a hideous memory. Although two years had passed since, her cheek was pallid when she kissed Nelly in one of her sudden passions of tenderness and fear that always puzzled the child.

"Darling dear, there are no fairies or witches!" To put the matter quite out of both their minds she raced with the children across the orchard and down the bank to their playhouse.

It was a little green close, carpeted with grass, walled with forest shrubs, shaded by a sycamore, and screened from the river by a thick growth of willows. Once a Delaware, bribed or terrorized into spying out the child's retreat, drew his canoe close to the bank. By standing up in his boat and parting the willows, he talked to her unseen from the fort. Nelly never mentioned the incident, for a casual Delaware made no more impression on her mind than a stray dog.

In the heat of that midsummer day the birds were silent and the woods entranced. The river, at its lowest and clearest, glided by. The

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tread of the sentinel on the rampart could be heard, and the dip of a paddle when a Delaware appeared with baskets of wild raspberries from Kilbuck Island. Yet on that tranquil day, so had she been shattered by months of horror, Mrs. Lytle started from a dozing sleep with a cry:

"Nelly, are you there, dear?"

"Yes, mother. Where would I be?" The child's merry face appeared at the entrance to her bower. She never could understand her mother's panics. Fifteen minutes later, when she ran to ask a question, she found her asleep.

Another canoe appeared, drifting in mid-channel. An Indian, shrouded in a dirty blanket, picked up his paddle and turned lazily toward the fort. The boat disappeared behind the fringing willows. It was a low whistle, like that of a cautious blackbird, which made Nelly turn to see, in a parting of the greenery, a boldly chiseled face, as alert and friendly as that of any innocent animal. Cornplanter's tone and smile were an invitation to adventure.

"Come! I'll show you that witch!"

So this was the person! Nelly jumped to her feet. "And fairies?"

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He was perplexed, but only for an instant. "Good spirits, too. Spirits of flowers and wind and water." The secret of the spell he cast upon her was that he believed it himself. To his primitive mind, nourished on grotesque and poetic myth, every natural thing was a mystery; and all his days were attended by favor or malice—even this one.

He could not hope to secure Nelly in broad daylight, under the walls of the fort, unless she went with him of her own accord; and any chance happening might betray him to an unrecorded death in the river. But not a muscle of his face twitched when she ran to "ask mother"; nor did it show relief when she turned at the opening, disappointed, and spoke softly over her shoulder.

"I can't ask her now. She's asleep."

"Tell her when she wakes. Quick! That witch will fly away!"

With a gleeful chuckle Nelly scrambled down the bank and into the boat. At Cornplanter's whispered bidding, that the witch might not see her, she lay flat and let him throw an old blanket over her.

The canoe floated out into full view. Turn-

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ing without haste, the Indian crossed the river. The sentinel watched him climb out and drag the boat into the thick undergrowth. But that clue was lost, for, in the briefest time, what looked to be the same Delaware pushed the canoe out and paddled up the river.

Behind the tall screen of willows and alders Cornplanter dropped his mean disguise. He stood up to his noble height and proud bearing so suddenly that Nelly clapped her hands in astonished delight. Magic had made this handsome bronze giant who melted into his own background like any genius of the woods. He was all in a hunter's summer suit of New England homespun, dyed a forest green, and in elkskin moccasins and leggings weathered to russet. And Nelly, with her spun-gold hair, her dancing feet, her butternut-dyed frock, and her vivid little face upturned to his so far above her, was a woodland elf at his feet.

"Where's the witch?"

"There!" He pointed to a red fox that, at a glimpse of them, vanished like a ruddy shadow. It might have been. He believed himself that witches had the power of instant transformation. "We'll catch her."

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He whisked the child up astride his neck and ran like a deer over the grassy floor of the open forest of huge oaks, walnuts and wild cherry trees, which covered the vast bottomland on which Allegheny City stands to-day. With the strength and speed of a hunted stag, Corn-planter crashed through the thickets of a ravine, and ran up a steep slope to the top of a bluff. Nelly was breathless when he set her down on McKee's Rock, three miles below the fort.

The rushing flood of the Ohio had here cut the earth away underneath, leaving a shelf of overhanging rock a hundred feet above the water. It was an outlook no boat could approach, for a dangerous eddy foamed at its base. The fort was barely visible because of an intervening island, but the branching streams could be seen for miles, lacing the wooded hills with silver. Not a canoe was on the waters, but as the chief swept the landscape with his bold gaze there was the muffled report of a gun.

Nelly had been missed.

Cannon-shots were no novelty to the little girl. With absorbed interest she watched the tall chief fit on a beaded headband with a snow-

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white heron feather, which he took from a hole in a tree. He adjusted his belt, from which hung the weapons of any white woodsman who traveled light—a small hatchet, a hunting-knife, and a horse-pistol. He was in no haste, for he had chosen his time when white men and red were a hundred miles to the west. There were none here to report his movements, and few to pursue.

From the same tree he now brought forth an arrow, and to the painted shaft he bound a sunny lock that Nelly let him sever, to stay that fleeing witch. Bows and arrows had long since been discarded by the Six Nations as serious weapons, but they still had their efficacy in superstitious rite. Nelly was to carry that decorated arrow for a magic wand, to transfix any evil thing that might lurk in the forest.

Boom! Boom! Boom! With the reverberating echoes the alarm had become a bombardment, so that even Nelly wondered what they were shooting so much for. Boats were now on all the streams, but Cornplanter still lingered, to put another string of white-and-purple wampum around Nelly's neck and a silver ring on her finger. His voice betrayed his emotion.

"LITTLE-SHIP-UNDER-SAIL"

"Daya-danonda!"

"What does it mean?" Nelly's short upper lip always lifted over her small white teeth when she smiled.

"Little sister." There was nothing in that to startle the child, for she was little sister to every homesick soldier in the fort.

"Say it again, please. It sounds so sweet that way."

He said it again, and Nelly repeated it. A new word delighted her. The chief was obliged to hold her close with one arm while he dropped down the steep bluff into a brush-grown gully.

And there stood the very biggest white horse Nelly had ever seen. Cornplanter shared the superstition of the Indians of the region that Colonel Washington bore a charmed life because of some virtue in his big white horse. He had secured a similar animal by the simple expedient of having a dream that Sir William Johnson intended to make him the gift. The dreams of important Indians were always taken seriously by this diplomatic agent of the Crown.

Blanketed and bridled in scarlet, and bitted with silver, the horse appeared to Nelly like a royal steed out of a fairy-tale. The chief lifted

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her and mounted behind. With knees and heels he guided the animal into a secret trail that ran northward to Lake Erie. Nelly's eyes were blue stars. With her magic wand she was a fairy queen, putting everything in that enchanting and enchanted forest, even her captor, under the spell of her gay caprice.

This gifted savage bent all his powers to the winning of the child he had stolen. His heart long famished, he wanted her love and trust. He had come alone that he might have her to himself for some days. There were no caresses, for he feared to alarm or offend her; but every tone and look was tender and protective. Giving her no time for reflection, he diverted her with everything of wonder, beauty, and tricksy fancy that peopled the ancient woods. And there was as much of lovely mystery there for the man as for the child, for he cherished with reverence the wild poetry of tribal myth and legend.

Time after time he saw, in some furry ear or tail, fleeting shadow or flicker of sunshine, the witch they pursued, only to report that it had turned into a fox, a chipmunk, a wild turkey, a toad, a prickly bush, or an ill-shapen stone.

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And Nelly was taken into dear, invisible company. The birds and leaves and pools were silent that they might listen to her chattering. Water tumbling over rocks was a gay spirit foaming into laughter. She fancied that she saw the mythical hunter lying asleep on a great bed of cool moss, and fleeing maidens dropping slippers that bloomed into painted moccasin-flowers. And then the chief was exalted by the tradition of an Iroquois albino, a story which bore some likeness to his own present good fortune. Nelly turned and looked up from his breast, with wide eyes and parted lips, while he told the tale that she came, in time, to confuse with her own mysterious origin and place of honor among the Senecas.

“Long before white men came in their winged canoes to Albany—the eastern door to the Long House of the Iroquois—there was a Seneca chief who was sad and lonely. The Great Spirit took pity on him. From his wigwam in the skies he sent a little daughter to be the light of the lodge. She was called Oniata, the White Lily, for her face was as fair as the summer dawn, her hair as bright as sunbeams. Her smile banished the evil powers of sickness and lighted

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the darkest trail. None could conquer that chief in war, for the White Lily dazzled the eyes of his enemies. Young braves sought him for a leader, and they laid their weapons and tribute of the chase at the feet of his beautiful daughter.

"But Oniata loved only her father. He dressed her in the richest garments and fed her with the choicest food. Hers was the softest bed in his lodge, the place of honor at his fireside. And all the good spirits loved her, too. Spirits of the falls guided her white birch-bark canoe in safety through foaming rapids. The sun shone on her path. The moon watched over her camp. The hunters of the sky lit their starry torches and ran before her on every journey."

"Then what happened?"

"That was long ago. The chief and his daughter went to dwell with the Great Spirit. But the wild flowers smell sweet to-day, the birds sing and the waters laugh, because Oniata loved them."

They were twenty miles from the Ohio, and the sun had set, when Cornplanter left the narrow trail and forced his horse through dense thickets, into the rock-walled and watered ravine where he meant to camp for the night.

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Nelly blinked in bewilderment when she was lifted to the ground. All the afternoon she had ridden through a green and gold land of Faery. Now she waked up in a very real world of enormous trees and colossal shadows. She was not frightened, but it was her very decided opinion that she wanted to go home to see her mother.

"Too late. The sun has gone into the western door of his wigwam. Soon he will draw the deerskin curtain."

"Is that where the sun goes?" Nelly had often wondered, and this seemed such a reasonable explanation. "It will be light again in the morning. Then you'll take me home?"

The chief evaded the question. "Every morning the sun comes out of his eastern door and shows his smiling face to the world."

The afterglow that had flooded the forest aisles was dying. Suddenly the child remembered something with startling distinctness. It was her mother's voice and look of alarm, "Nelly, are you there, dear?"

"Take me home now!" she demanded. "Mother's scared when I'm not there."

"She knows you are in the woods with some one," he reassured her.

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Nelly could not analyze such sophistry, and no one had ever told her a lie. Her steady gaze challenged him, but there were no tears or reproaches. Her beauty and charm had captured the chief two years before, but if she had been a timid, wistful, helpless child she could never have held his regard as she held it now with her bravery, high spirits and energy.

With native shrewdness he gave her something to be busy about. With a handful of dry leaves and a flash of gunpowder he had a fire in an instant, but they both had to hurry to gather twigs and fallen branches to feed the flames. Cornplanter watched her scudding around, her short little petticoat whipping in the evening wind, and her bright hair flying like a banner. She reminded him of the British sailing-vessels on Lake Ontario, and that suggested a name for her. It was an Iroquois compound, made up of soft liquids and nasals, long, rolling vowels and gutturals that sounded like water chuckling over a stony bed. Nelly laughed.

“What does that mean?”

“Little-ship-under-full-sail.”

“Oh, how dear and funny! What’s the name of this—and this—and this?” She rocked with

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laughter at the strange words, and insisted on repeating them. The chief had a vision of long, happy winter evenings with his mother and Nelly by the fire in the lodge. He was so absorbed in the delightful task of teaching her his native vocabulary that the fire all but went out.

Nelly dropped promptly and puffed out her cheeks to blow it into flames again, but Corn-planter quickly set her on her feet.

"Bad medicine! Fire is a good giant when fed by the spirits of the wind. But if you blow it with your breath it breaks loose and tries to burn up the world."

With a leafy branch he fanned the fire to a blaze, and they sat on their heels in the cheerful glow to eat their supper. They had nothing but a handful of parched and pounded corn mixed with maple sugar—warrior's bread—but with drinks that bubbled up into their mouths from a spring, it was enough. To provide breakfast the chief baited some hooks and dropped them from anchored lines into a deep pool of the creek. In the bank above he stuck a pine-knot torch that would burn half the night and lure the wary trout. Then, after he had told Nelly about his mother, who was a

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queen and quite splendidly dressed, but who was sad and lonely because she had no little daughter to call her "Noyeh," it was time for a papoose to go to sleep.

"How can I sleep, without a house or a bed? Oh!" she cried, jumping up and down in her excitement. "Make me a dear little wigwam."

It was a matter of moments for Cornplanter to cut and trim stout hemlock boughs, set them up in a circle of holes, and tie them at the top with a length of vine. Together they gathered a quantity of long, dry grass for a bed, and when it had been spread with the horse's silver-fringed, scarlet blanket, it was a couch for Sleeping Beauty.

Nelly knelt beside the chief to say her prayer. She gulped something and winked away a tear when she asked God not to let mother be scared. The chief would fetch her home, right away after she had seen the sad queen and called her "Noyeh," to comfort her.

Some profound emotion filled the man as he listened to her. He, too, must pray—must bind this child to himself with a bond of love, by sending a message to the little sister who dwelt in the wigwam of the Great Spirit.

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Lifting Nelly so that her feet might not be bruised on the stones, he carried her up the ravine to where the walls rose in sheer cliffs. There he raised his voice to a shout. The rocky walls repeated his words, tossed them back and forth, until the echoes—winged message-bearers of the air—seemed to leap and mount and die away among the stars.

"Daya-danonda—mourn no more! Your brother—is comforted! His lodge—will not—be lonely!"

"Is your little sister in heaven? Can she hear you?" Nelly was all wondering awe and tender sympathy.

"Yes, speak to her! Tell her you love her brother. Tell her you will be good to her Noyeh. It will make her happy."

So Nelly shouted. Her sweet treble awoke a jangle of echoes that rang like a chime of silver bells.

As he carried her back through the starlit darkness Cornplanter pressed the darling little girl to his heart. She was almost asleep when he laid her on her fragrant bed. He stretched himself where he could guard her, between the little green wigwam and the fire.

IV

AT JOHNSON HALL

ALWAYS "going home in the morning," after seeing something else of wonder or delight, Nelly was hurried from one bewildering experience to another. Cornplanter stopped with her at every Indian village on Buffalo Creek and the Upper Genesee, to hold councils with other chiefs and sachems. To mark the anger and defiance of the Senecas and Cayugas, he was authorized to wear his British officer's uniform of evil fame to the Grand Council at Johnson Hall. He planned to arrive late, by the overland trail, attended by mounted braves of both Nations, and to parade his little white captive before Sir William and the assembled Iroquois and white settlers of eastern New York.

In his own big, stockaded town that with its miles of corn-fields, orchards and pastures lay above the falls of the Genesee, Cornplanter

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donned the uniform, his head-dress of colored and tufted heron plumes, and every ornament of savagery that he possessed. And Nelly's "Noyeh," her wrinkled brown face beaming with happiness in the new and lovely little daughter, clothed the child in barbaric splendor. There was a petticoat of scarlet broadcloth, a wealth of Indian embroidery on the moccasins and leggings of palest fawnskin, and the jaunty blue silk jacket was studded and festooned with silver and wampum. She looked like a little pagan idol when, under the burning sun of a sultry morning in late July, she rode with the chief up the long avenue of Lombardy poplars to the portal of Johnson Hall.

No less pretentious word would describe the massive entrance to the fortress-like stone mansion, with its flanking towers, which dominated a bend of the Mohawk River. With its park, its typical English village, and its farms of tenantry, it was like any old baronial hall on the Thames. And now, wherever there was shelter from the sun, warriors of the Six Nations and settlers from distant points were encamped around their cooking-fires. Thus Cornplanter had an audience of twenty-five

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hundred people to witness his spectacular entry. It was the custom for each band of delegates to proceed quietly to its own camp. So white people surged toward the house, negro slaves ran from their quarters, and even the Indians rose to their feet to watch his stately progress up the avenue. A black groom in livery, not waiting for orders, hurried down the steps to hold the horse of this arrogant chief while he dismounted and lifted Nelly to the ground.

Taking her hand, he strode into the house. The wide central hall was crowded with guests, for a gay house-party had come up from Albany. As they were to dine early, in full dress, and appear on the stone balcony above the porte-cochère, as a part of the ceremonies of the afternoon, they were all in the powder and patches and picturesque evening costume of the period. When the chief entered with Nelly, gentlemen stood transfixed, and ladies fled to the stairs. Not since the peace with Pontiac, of eight years before, had an Indian been seen with a white captive.

The German butler, feeling entirely competent to turn this insolent intruder out, hustled up importantly. But Molly Brant, the handsome

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Mohawk princess whom Sir William had made "the brown Lady Johnson," waved him aside, and approached Cornplanter with a disarming smile.

"Was there no one to direct you, Gar-yan-wah-ga?" she inquired, ignoring both his costume and his companion. "The Seneca camp is in the grove west of the big meadow."

"I will see my Great White Brother before the Grand Council is held," he announced.

"Sir William is not here yet, but is expected at any moment. He has been living in his bark hut in the woods at Saratoga Springs, for his health."

Cornplanter scowled. It was not agreeable to him to be kept waiting, but he would wait.

"You will not wait here." Molly drew herself up haughtily. She had an imperious temper to match his own, and a jealous regard for Sir William's dignity. "It is not likely that he will be able to give private audiences. You may see his secretary, Mr. Guy Johnson, now, if you wish."

For ten years Sir William Johnson had been subject to attacks of a chronic trouble, and of pain from an old wound. But he was still

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under sixty, of commanding figure, and of tireless energy in work, social pleasures and manly sports, so he was generally thought to be a robust man. Cornplanter was skeptical.

"He will see me," he asserted, with insufferable arrogance, "and I will wait here."

Molly turned her back on him. He sat down in a high-backed chair of carven oak that fitted him like a throne. With a caress of her bright hair he drew Nelly between his silver-buckled knees. The child felt puzzled and rebuffed. Her friendly smiles at these attractive strangers had won only fascinated and terrified stares. A bedizened and bewildered little pawn of war and diplomacy, she snuggled closer in the chief's protecting arm.

With instant comprehension, Mrs. Guy Johnson witnessed the scene from the stair landing. Slipping down the flight she turned, unnoticed, into the library. Guy was there, with Molly's brother, Joseph, for a secretary and interpreter. Sir William had sent this young Mohawk chief of brilliant gifts to the scholarly Doctor Wheelock to be educated. She leaned against the closed door until she could manage to speak.

"Guy, that—that Seneca chief we saw at

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Fort Pitt is here—in the house—in his British uniform. Molly was magnificent, but he routed her."

Guy Johnson sprang to his feet with a smothered oath. "The Senecas have a real grievance. It's damnable that we were refused troops from Montreal. Joseph, see what you can do with Cornplanter. Fetch him in here."

When they were alone she went on: "He has captured that lovely child he fancied. You remember her—Eleanor Lytle?"

"Well, it's no more than that fire-eating Virginian ought to expect. Captain Lytle is one of the leaders of that dastardly war in Ohio."

Her dark eyes followed his angry prowlings up and down the room with entreaty. "Guy, you will do something about it, dear?"

"That is for your father to decide, and I think he will do nothing. The Senecas and Cayugas are in a dangerous mood. We must think of ourselves—of Niagara and the Western posts. With the seaboard and frontier both boiling into rebellion we need the friendship or neutrality of every Indian out to the Mississippi."

A fanfare of bugle notes was heard from the river. At the door Guy Johnson turned and

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kissed his wife. "Don't let your tender heart betray you into meddling in this affair. What is the fate of one little girl when an empire is at stake?"

They composed themselves and hurried into the hall, to follow the guests out to the portico. Sir William's canopied barge was being tied up to the pier, a quarter of a mile below the house. Joseph Brant had cleared the landing of eager spectators, and he now signaled Guy to open a passage up the avenue. Continuous lines of people—white, black and red—shocked into silence, stood with uncovered heads while young Mohawk braves bore Sir William to the house on a rustic litter. In the hall, even Cornplanter got to his feet in shame.

"I will go now," he said to Molly Brant. In her great trouble she had quite forgotten him.

Sir William heard, and turned a face that was suffused with the heat and drawn with suffering. "No brother—stay. I will see you presently."

He insisted on being taken to the library, and having his negro valet there to shave and dress him for the ceremonies of the afternoon. Against the protest of the doctor who had come up from Albany, he sent for Cornplanter.

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From a couch he fixed the chief with blue Irish eyes at once accusing and full of grief.

"Gar-yan-wah-ga, have you come here to insult and threaten your friend and protector? It was for your sake that I begged you to let the British garrison remain in Fort Pitt, but you joined Pontiac in making it a condition of peace that we get out. No troops can be spared now to win that post back. Ten thousand are needed in Boston. My son is in London to ask for a larger army for America. And I am planning to send a commission of loyalists and Iroquois to join him there, and to see the king in person. Would you like to go?"

It was the largest bribe Sir William had it in his power to offer. Since Joseph Brant's father, known as "King of the Mohawks," had been lionized by the court of Queen Anne, it had been the dream of every Iroquois warrior to see the glories and taste the pleasures of London. While Cornplanter was still dazzled by that prospect, Sir William explained, affably: "You could not wear this uniform there. It would be misunderstood."

Cornplanter returned his look without flinching. "I have no quarrel with you, Great White

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Brother, but I will not go to London." Springing to his feet he beat his breast, and in a burst of oratory went to the heart of his fear and anger. "Your English king oppresses us, too. The Long House of the Iroquois has been shortened. Neither Albany nor Schenectady is now our eastern door. The Mohawks and Oneidas are persuaded to sign away their lands. They are being crowded westward. Virginians push back the tribes of Ohio, and move up the Alleghany. We are surrounded and pressed in on every side. You hold our western door at Niagara. Who helps or defends us? But we burn with rage. The Senecas and Cayugas of the lakes are united against destruction."

"We are all at fault," Sir William admitted, sadly. "And now we are in a snarl of difficulties that only kindness and fair dealing can untangle. We cannot even begin while there is so much bad blood."

For the first time he appeared to notice Nelly, who had been flitting about the beautiful room like a tropic butterfly. "The civil authorities at Fort Pitt are doing their best to catch and punish the murderers of Logan's family, and you must return this child to her people. Her

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father will pay you handsomely. He always has as many as half a hundred horses."

The chief stiffened. "She is my little sister. No ransom will buy her back. She dwells in my lodge." Then, with the sagacity that was one of his traits, he put Sir William and his household under parole: "There are no squaws in our warriors' camp to guard my little sister. I will leave her here with Molly Brant."

Sir William was done—defeated. He could hope for nothing more, for a time, than that the Senecas and Cayugas would remain neutral. To prevent an open break on this public occasion he made an appeal to the Indian code: "Brother, I think Joseph could find you a more suitable dress in which to smoke the peace pipe."

Cornplanter left the room with Joseph to change the offending coat, and Molly led Nelly to the nursery. She came back to sit on the floor, wigwam fashion, at Sir William's side, to attend to his wants. She had no tears, but his dwarf protégé, "Dutch Billy," sat in a dim corner of the darkened room, weeping silently and playing minor melodies on his violon until his beloved patron fell asleep.

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An hour later, making sure that no one was in the upper hall to observe her, Mrs. Guy Johnson slipped into the nursery. The older children were in the schoolroom, and the fat German nurse had gone to sleep. Nelly had given Molly's solemn, black-eyed baby his dinner of bread and milk, and put him in his cradle. She was sitting on the floor, rocking him, when the pretty lady came in and dropped beside her. The motherly little girl was all concern:

"He just cried and cried! I fink he's getting some new teef."

"Nelly, dear, don't you know me? I'm Croggy's Madame Guy! I sent you the doll."

The child's arms went around her in such a tight embrace that it was as though she clutched at something of the old life that was slipping from her memory. There were times when she was confused as to her identity. The flood-gates of talk opened.

"I left dolly in the playhouse when I came away with brother to see the witch."

"With—with whom?"

"Brother—the chief. He said I must call him that. He was going to take me home, but

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his horse got too tired. He had a dream that some one was going to give me a pony to ride."

"He'll get the pony. His dreams always come true." Molly's children were wild about the Shetlands on Sir William's stock-breeding farm.

"Then he'll take me home." Nelly was confident. The brave and trusting little girl had no idea that she had been stolen. "But first we must go back to show Noyeh the pony. She's an Indian queen, but she's sweet and wrinkled, and she gives me goodies to eat like grandmother. She's going to teach me how to sew beads and make a basket."

Madame Guy got to her feet. Then she could bear it no longer. She did not know that her father and Molly had given their word of honor to return Nelly to Cornplanter, but in any case she was not bound by that. And she had the conviction that no empire was worth saving if it refused to spread its protecting wings over a defenseless child. If she were cautious Nelly might be rescued. It occurred to her to get the chivalrous young Irish tutor to help her. Among the many settlers who had come to see the Grand Council he would be able to find some Dutch or Palatine German family

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with numerous blond children. In such company, with her hair cut and disguised as a boy, Nelly might be smuggled to friends of her own in Albany.

She dropped to her knees again, and put her arms around the child to whisper: "Listen, darling, if I should wake you up in the night you must climb out of bed at once. Don't speak or make a noise, and you must do whatever I tell you. Do you understand, dear?"

Nelly nodded. With another hug, and a kiss so hard that it left a print on her cheek, Madame Guy was gone.

Because of the heat, only a symbolic council-fire of a few pine knots was built on a stone platform on the lawn. Its column of resinous smoke quivered in the still air all the afternoon. Six hundred warriors squatted in semicircles around it, facing the balcony on which the house guests were assembled. Behind them white spectators were massed to the river bank. Indian orators, speaking in their own dialects, paced the open space before the fire with the grace of panthers, and wore their richly ornamented blankets draped like Roman togas.

It was three o'clock when Sir William ap-

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peared. Carried up-stairs, and supported to the French window which opened on the balcony, he walked alone to the stone balustrade and leaned his weight upon it. But after a few sentences he straightened to his full height. Then for two hours he spoke with his old-time fiery appeal which was comparable to that of Patrick Henry. All the brilliancy of mind, the personal charm, the political faith, the kindness and honesty of the man came out. He wore his dress of a Mohawk sachem, and he reminded the Six Nations that his family and fortunes were bound to theirs by ties of interest and affection. His star would rise or sink with theirs. He made his last plea for them to "brighten the ancient chain of friendship" with Great Britain.

When he had finished, he lit the peace-pipe, smoked it and handed it down to Joseph Brant on the lawn below. In turning, he swayed and fell into the arms of Guy and Molly.

There was to have been a tournament of English and Indian games and feats of skill on the big meadow, and a court minuet danced by the guests in costume on the lawn. But no one, now, moved from his place. In death-like stillness the peace-pipe went around. Six

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hundred pairs of burning eyes were fixed upon the house. At sunset Guy Johnson came out to the balcony and lifted his hand.

"Your Great White Brother has gone to dwell in the wigwam of the Great Spirit."

The Indians were stupefied by the calamity, then in a panic of confusion and fear that they had been left without a protector. It was an hour before Guy Johnson and Joseph could reassure them, and persuade them to go to their camps to prepare the ceremony of mourning.

Had the family been alone in their bereavement, Madame Guy might not have forgotten Nelly. But the house was full of guests; every one within a hundred miles, it seemed, came to the funeral, and the Iroquois Nations filled the land with their clamorous grief. While Sir William lay in state in the hall, the tribes brought their wampum strings and belts to lay upon him—"to dry their tears, to sweep the ashes from their dead fires, to clear the sky of evil omen, and to put the sun in its place again." And by night they sang their death-songs in every echoing gorge, shouting for warriors gone before to come back, to escort their Great White Brother to the happy hunting-grounds.

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Not until two days after the burial did they begin to go out in slow, mournful processions to their own lands.

It was seeing the last band of Oneidas getting into their canoes that reminded Madame Guy of Nelly. Servants were putting the house in order and carrying away dead flowers when she ran up-stairs to the nursery. Molly was there, in the straight black robe and the hanging braid of the squaw who has no pride in her appearance, gathering up her children's toys and clothing.

"Oh, Molly, you're not going?" she faltered.

"Yes, to my brother's farm at Canajoharie. This is nothing," she said, with a sweeping gesture. "The glory has departed."

So many dear memories of this devoted woman, who had given her father twenty years of happiness, crowded upon her, that it was moments before she could recall what she had come for. Then she learned something that sent her to pray in the little English church in the village, where tall funeral candles still burned on the altar.

The long summer twilight had darkened to dusk when she came out. Half-way across the park she was arrested by a shout from the pier.

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A boatload of militia from Fort Pitt was disembarking. Captain Lytle leaped out first, and raced to overtake her. His eyes were blood-shot; a ten days' beard bristled through the pallid skin of his sunken cheeks.

"Nelly! Is she here? We met settlers going home. They said Cornplanter had a little white captive. Every one called her 'Princess Nelly of the Senecas.'"

Madame Guy was sobbing brokenly when she caught his shaking hands to her breast. "She was here—she rode out yesterday—on her Shetland pony—with an escort of two hundred and fifty Senecas and Cayugas. I had a plan to rescue her, and then—my father! When death comes into the house you forget—everything else."

The man sagged; his knees all but gave way. "I know," he said, presently, in a lifeless voice. "My wife thinks of nothing else. She's losing her mind." He took off his cap as in a daze, and wiped the sweat of anguish from his pale forehead. "I will take her and the baby to her mother in Baltimore, by way of Albany and the coast. Then I'll come back, and kill that chief, and get Nelly."

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"Oh, captain, don't think of it! It is much more likely that I can get her. I've been praying to God to give me another chance. Corn-planter's big town is stockaded and it is buried two hundred miles deep in Iroquois country. The Six Nations have never been conquered. It would take an army of ten thousand men—"

The word was a spur to his flagging spirit. "There'll be an army, and it will burn every Iroquois village out to the Genesee."

She heard him say it again, shouting it and shaking his fists at the sky, like a man gone insane, "There'll be an army!" as he went in a stumbling run down the dark avenue to the boat.

V

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DURING the first two years of the Revolution the lakes and forest region of western New York, where Nelly was held in captivity, was an island of peace in a sea of war. For their own security the Senecas and Cayugas observed the strictest neutrality. With grief and fear they had witnessed the flight of the Tories and the Mohawk Indians to Canada, and the breaking up of the ancient Iroquois Confederacy. Then, when the exiles came back over Lake Ontario to the British forts at Oswego and Niagara, the reunited Tories and Six Nations saw a chance to capture the old New York frontier, and to recover their lost lands to Albany.

So Nelly was eight years old when she first saw her Indian brother in war-paint and feathers. Guy Johnson—who had succeeded Sir William as Superintendent of Indian Affairs,

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with the rank of colonel—Joseph Brant, and other leaders, came from Niagara to hold a conference in Cornplanter's town. Until late into a hot, midsummer night scores of warriors sat around the council-fire listening to frenzied oratory. Nelly heard their voices in loud, excited speech, and wondered what it was all about until she fell asleep.

To the happy and energetic little girl, who had quite forgotten her old life, every day in the populous Indian town was a fresh adventure. She was usually the first one astir in the chief's good house of hewn and white-washed logs. But on the morning after the council, Noyeh came to waken her and to deck her in all her gaudy finery. The festival of green corn was to be held, and the braves of the village were to give the war-dance. Nelly understood only a part of this, for she had never seen the war-dance. But the corn-dance, in which braves, squaws, and papooses all joined hands and trotted rhythmically around a bonfire, was a semi-religious frolic, as innocent and merry as any rustic celebration of St. John's Eve.

"Oh, goody!" she cried. "That will be fun." She could hardly stand still while her hair was

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being brushed. This pampered little white princess of the prosperous Indian nation that had the privilege of supplying Fort Niagara with corn, orchard fruits, horses and cattle, had a properly fitted toilet-table that had come all the way from Montreal. Noyeh loved to wash her hair with perfumed soap, and then to brush it until it glistened, and every filament twined around its neighbor in a shower of pale gold locks that fell below her shoulders.

The lodge was built in one big, barn-like room, with sleeping-apartments curtained off along one side with bright blankets and embroidered deerskins. The moment when his little sister drew the door curtain of her tiny bedroom and danced out to smile on the world was a second rising of the sun to Cornplanter. He had always been as punctilious in his own dress as any white dignitary. But on that morning he wore only a breech-cloth, his crown of tufted heron plumes, and sundry strings of claws and shells, and his face and body were painted in horrific designs with black, white, and vermillion. Shocked by the sight of him, all the pretty color faded from Nelly's cheeks and the laughter died on her lips.

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"I don't like you that way," she said, in a choked voice and with eyes averted.

The chief was suddenly sick with dismay. "Daya-danonda, smile at me," he pleaded. "I make myself frightful to meet my enemies in battle."

But there was no explaining the bestial figure he had made of himself to Nelly. "No! you are not my good brother now. You look like a wicked animal."

She turned and ran back to her bedroom. Inexpressibly hurt, her confidence in his goodness and decency betrayed, she ate her breakfast there with Noyeh. Tears rolled down the old queen's face, that was as crinkled as a scrap of brown crêpe.

"Don't cry, Noyeh. Let's go away to the island and camp, just you and I."

The chief heard her, and it cut him to the heart. It was he who had discovered to Nelly, in midstream two miles above the town, that little island of sunny glades, tinkling springs, and friendly birds and squirrels. The companion of all her delights, he had taken her to every lovely spot in the storied valley of the Genesee, and told her its poetic legend. He had

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not foreseen her feeling, but he understood it, and he submitted to it with a certain simplicity and nobility.

"Yes, Noyeh," he called to his mother, "take her away for the night."

He was standing bolt-upright, staring at the wall, when Nelly ran past him. He heard her go out through the sally-port which opened on the river; then the dip of a paddle, for in her little white birch-bark canoe the child could navigate the shallow water near the bank like a wild duck. Then he was alone, bereft, and with a sense of impending disaster.

He had been warned by omens of evil. A venomous snake had crossed his path; above the warriors about the council-fire a meteor had hurtled across a sky that sparkled with peaceful stars; an owl had hooted in derision of a dream of revenge and glory. With an effort he dismissed his superstitious fears, for to the reasoning mind there was no flaw in the forces and strategy to be employed in the opening of border war. Yet the first surprise attack failed. Ten days after Cornplanter danced the war-dance and marched out of his village, he fled, leaving thirty of his hundred painted braves

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lying in the cannon-shattered woods of Oriskany.

But even in the hour when he cried, "*Oonah!*" ("Retreat"), the bitterest word in the vocabulary of an Iroquois warrior, he did not forget to protect his little sister from knowledge of the horrors of Indian warfare. When a spent messenger battered at the gate, crying out news of the defeat and of the bringing in of a half-dozen captives for torture, Noyeh hurried Nelly into a canoe. In the island retreat the howls of rage of returning braves, and the shrieks of victims and of mourning squaws could not reach her ears.

For the next two years the Iroquois Nations fell into a debauch of ferocity, carrying the desolation of massacre, burning and capture into every settled valley from the Mohawk to the Ohio. In that orgy of blood and fire Cornplanter shared with Joseph Brant the infamy of leadership. But of this Nelly knew nothing. The one thing that could not be concealed from her was the blight which fell on the Senecas—a piteous mystery that hurried the child of quick sympathies and eager helpfulness toward an early maturity of mind and heart.

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There was much sickness and no gaiety in the lodges, no social visiting among the villages. The number of young warriors steadily decreased, and in that terrible winter when Washington's soldiers left their bloody footprints in the snow at Valley Forge, and the tribes could do no hunting, there would have been famine on the Genesee but for the chief's great stores of corn. Under that brutalizing fear the older braves degenerated into gloomy tyrants and drove weeping squaws and papooses to incessant toil in the fields.

Then the ferocity of the Iroquois reacted to their own destruction. An American army with artillery marched westward, burning Indian villages, destroying crops, taking the horses and cattle, and hunting the tribes out of the country like so many bands of wild beasts. Troops were sent eastward from Niagara—British regulars, Tories, Hessians and Mohawks—to check the invaders, but these forces were broken up and hurled back in a disastrous rout.

The Senecas made the last stand. When fugitive Onondagas and Cayugas began to stream through to the Niagara trail, Corn-

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planter gathered all the warriors, old men and young boys in the valley, and marched out to defend the towns on the Genesee. Choosing a point twenty miles to the east, where several trails converged at a ford, he disposed his braves in ambush among the trees. With the creek behind him in flood from cold September rains, he thought he could cut the enemy in two there, forcing part into the swollen stream and surrounding the rest for slaughter.

He had not thought it possible for heavy guns to be moved along the narrow, mired trails, so the undisciplined of his force were demoralized when cannon-shot began to crash through the trees. Rallying his braves on a bluffy bank, he covered the retreat through a ravine to a safer ford with his few veteran warriors. His crested plumes topped all other heads, his voice rang like a trumpet above the explosion of shells. When his ammunition was exhausted, clubbed flintlocks met the soldiers in blue and buff who swarmed up the slope.

It was every man for himself, then, in a hand-to-hand fight. With a cry of fury an officer leaped at the chief. They were locked in a strangling grapple when the rain-softened

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bank crumbled under their feet and dropped a score of struggling men to their death in the raging torrent. With a wrench Cornplanter rolled up on top and freed himself. In the uniform of the Continental Army he had not recognized his assailant, but now, above the foam for an instant, he saw the face of the officer he had stunned with a blow and sent spinning down the flood.

A bullet struck his arm as he gained the farther bank. Tumbling into a gully he dug the ball out with his scalping-knife, and he cut up the tail of his buckskin shirt for a bandage and sling. Alone, and in the darkness of a rainy night, he stumbled along twenty miles of slippery trails to his all but deserted town.

Some of his braves had come in, weaponless, exhausted and panic-stricken, and in a dawn that was rosy with the light of a burning village, the squaws and papooses fled. Noyeh and Nelly refused to leave until the chief appeared. And then, wounded, ruined, a fugitive from the home his ancestors had held for three centuries, Cornplanter's "little sister" was suddenly restored to him by her own tender pity for his misfortunes. A hovering spirit of maternal affec-

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tion and capability, the ten-year-old child took charge of affairs and brought order out of confusion.

Noyeh was to ride the pony and lead a pack-animal, and Nelly announced her intention of sitting in front of the chief. He had only to hold on to her tight with his one good arm, and she could guide the big white horse over the broad trail that, for one hundred miles, ran through unbroken woods to Fort Niagara. She was about to climb up from a hitching-block when she remembered something.

"Wait a minute, brother!" In the dreary inclosure which still rang with cries of despair, her voice was a gallant little banner of sound. She darted back into the stripped lodge, to get the one treasure from her mysterious past—a white vellum prayer-book in a beaded pouch.

They left the gate wide, the town of a hundred good lodges and twenty thousand bushels of stored corn, to the torch of the conqueror. It took a heart-breaking half-hour to skirt the lush pastures, the orchard of hundreds of laden apple and peach trees, and the two-mile field of ripening maize. Smoke drifted through the drenched and yellowing forest as they turned

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into the trail, and by night their wild camp was illuminated by the glare from their burning village.

Fort Niagara stood on the east bank, on a bare elevation in the angle between the river and the lake. There was safety under the great guns on the bastions, for the American force was not strong enough for an attack, nor supplied for a seige. But there was no shelter on this exposed point which had long been denuded of trees. Wave-washed at all seasons, it was sun-baked in summer, and in winter an arctic waste buffeted by storm. Hundreds of half-crazed refugees were huddled about the walls in hastily built huts of poles and bark. Never again, in a lifetime spent on wild frontiers, did Eleanor Lytle urge a horse through such a press of human misery as when she took Cornplanter to the military hospital in Fort Niagara.

With ringing cheers from soldiers who swarmed up on the gun-platforms, the ponderous gate of iron-banded timbers was swung wide for little Princess Nelly of the Senecas, who brought in the wounded hero of a hundred savage exploits. Guards helped them dismount, and an orderly guided them through and

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around a maze of rude buildings to the proper door.

They were standing in the crowded corridor of a barrack that was filled with groans and the babblings of delirium when Mrs. Guy Johnson, hurrying from a ward, saw them. A gasping sigh escaped her. Here was the chance for which she had prayed, to rescue Nelly; and it came at a time when there were scores of captive children more piteous than she, and no chance to rescue any one. For more than four years no message to or from the old friends at Fort Pitt had spanned that wide chasm of war.

Cornplanter was so weak and dizzy from pain and loss of blood that he swayed like a pine-tree in the wind, but he refused the support of the wall. He clung to Nelly's hand and, although in the mental confusion of a burning fever, he clung to the thought that he must take care of her.

"This is no place for my little sister." He scowled, with displeasure, as Madame Guy hastened toward them, and that war-worn lady almost found it in her heart to love him for his fierce devotion.

"My brother has been hurt!" Nelly cried, her

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lips quivering, tears welling up and hanging on her lashes. "May I stay with him?"

"No, dear; it would break your heart. You are to come with me, but you may see him every day." She decided quickly that, as it might be months or even years before it would be possible to restore the child to her own people, it would be cruel to tell her anything now.

When a surgeon had taken charge of the chief she hurried Nelly out of the building. The child had not recognized her. And, indeed, in the straight black gown and white-coifed head of a nurse, the dark-eyed lady who shared her husband's exile, loss of fortune and heavy responsibilities, looked more like a nun than like the patched and powdered beauty of Johnson Hall. She was filled with amazement and gratitude to find the little girl as sweet and clean, as sunny of spirit and as gentle of manner as though she had been brought up in a walled garden of old England.

She led Nelly at once to her cozy living-rooms in the officers' quarters, with their books and music and dainty table and toilet fittings. She meant to keep her there, shut away from such human wreckage of human violence as no child

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should ever look upon. What a pleasure it would be to teach her to read! Just to come in from terrible scenes in hospital and camp and see her there, little Goldilocks curled in a big chair with a story-book, would be medicine for their distracted minds and hearts.

"It's so sweet here," said Nelly. "But I must go back to Noyeh. She's in the Seneca camp. She wants me to help her take care of the papooses. So many of the poor squaws are sick, and the babies are always good with me."

"You are a dear, brave child, and I'm a selfish lady. I wanted you just to be the light of my lodge." Madame Guy kissed her. With no other concern now than to set Nelly on her shining way, she led her to a small postern in the wall. To that gate Noyeh was to fetch her back, every evening at sunset. She watched the little running figure until it was lost in the crowd.

It was three days before Madame Guy had the permission of the surgeon to talk with Corn-planter, to learn what he knew of Nelly's family. Colonel Croghan was dead, and except for the fact that Captain Lytle had taken his wife to relations of unknown name in Baltimore,

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she had no clue by which the little girl could ever be restored to her family. The chief's mother was old, and he might die of his ill-dressed and neglected wound. As she sat on a camp-stool beside his rude cot of poles and raw-hide, waiting for him to wake from a heavy sleep, she shuddered to think that Nelly might yet become a waif of the forest, at the mercy of ruined Indians who were fast falling into savagery.

An Iroquois warrior was not to be insulted by sparing him a brutal fact, so she spoke to the point as soon as he opened his eyes. "Gar-yan-wah-ga, you know you may die? The surgeon has said so."

"Of this?" He pointed to his swollen arm scornfully. "My flesh is as wild as a stag's. It will heal in a month."

"But you will be on the war-path again. You must make your peace with the Great Spirit. Your little sister is not a captive, taken honorably in war; and in the wigwam in the skies a child-stealer is as bad as a coward." He winced perceptibly, for this was a truth which secretly shook his resolution. "You know her name—Eleanor Lytle. Do you know anything of her family?"

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"Her father is dead. He was drowned in Redbank Creek. He came with the Continental Army to kill me. I flung him off with a blow. He went like driftwood, spinning down the flood."

She shut her eyes and leaned against the wall. It astonished her to find that she held the chief blameless. On this war-maddened continent any man must kill or be killed. Oh yes, Captain Lytle would be there, "to kill that chief and get Nelly." He was there, twenty miles from where his little daughter lay in an unguarded town that was to be burned to the ground the next day, when the fortunes of war made that ironic comment on his long-held purpose. She remembered Nelly's tears for this chief who had stolen her and slain her father.

Cornplanter dismissed the matter with a shrug. Things of greater moment were in his mind. "How are my people? Are they building good lodges and getting in firewood? Do they complain? Tell them that any animal suffers in silence. Can they not be as brave as dogs? We are men. We do not sink into despair. Bands must go out to hunt. Next spring the squaws will plant corn on Buffalo

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Creek. The braves will be on the war-path. We will win back our lost lands and rebuild our towns."

She could say nothing more to rebuke and discourage a dauntless spirit that would be a tower of strength to Guy. In the bitter season which followed there were five thousand soldiers, prisoners and fugitives at Niagara to be fed, clothed and sheltered. No sailing-vessel came over the stormy lake with supplies from Montreal for five months. Hunters went out, to perish in blizzards. The Indians taught white people to eat birch and elm bark, and sweet acorns dug from frozen drifts, to save themselves from scurvy.

In the fort, beleaguered by cold and famine, the nights were made hideous by horrid rites of superstition in the Indian camps. To keep some hours of the long evenings sane and sweet Madame Guy taught Nelly to read. It was toward spring when the child brought forth the treasure whose nature and use had been revealed to her. "I have a book, too," she said, proudly, and she laid the white-vellum prayer-book in the lady's lap.

"Why, wherever did you get it, dear?"

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Nelly did not know. She had always had it. Perhaps the Great Spirit had given it to her for a charm when he sent her to be the light of her brother's lodge. "It's so white and gold, like the clouds and the sun. It has writing in it, but I can't read it yet."

So Madame Guy read the inscription that young Lieutenant McKillip, anxious for the friends he was leaving on the undefended Pennsylvania border, had written nearly eight years before: "To Nelly, from Danny, with his love and prayers for her safety and happiness."

"Who is Danny? What does it mean? Is the book a charm?"

"Yes, it's a charm, to keep you fit for heaven and the company of angels. It's a prayer-book, like mine; and it means that God has not forgotten a brave, sweet girl. Now we'll have a story of your favorite hero, Chevalier Bayard, before you go to bed. We'll pretend that Danny is the Knight without Reproach. He's hidden away somewhere in these woods. And he is sure to come riding in on his foaming charger, just when a faithful friend is needed most."

She remembered the young officer at Fort Pitt, his fondness for Nelly, and his emotion at

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parting from the family of Captain Lytle, but she could not recall his name. As soon as the little girl had been tucked into bed she sped to Colonel Guy's office with the book.

"Dan McKillip," he said, at once. "He was promoted to a captaincy at Detroit and sent down the Wabash to Vincennes. That post was captured more than a year ago by George Rogers Clark, a Virginian settled in Kentucky. Virginia has a tight grip on the Ohio Valley from Fort Pitt to the old French towns on the Mississippi." He reflected grimly on the heavy price England had paid for her folly in evacuating Fort Pitt. Taking some papers from a pigeon-hole, he referred to a list. "'Captain Daniel McKillip, missing.' Probably held a prisoner in some far-Western post. If he's living he'll turn up at the end of the war."

"If he's living he'll go to the ends of the earth to find Mrs. Lytle and risk his life to restore Nelly to her mother," Madame Guy said. After a thoughtful silence she added: "Nelly is a little girl yet, but it is unthinkable that she should remain with the Indians more than a few years longer. I was married before I was sixteen, and so was her mother."

VI

A BAYARD IN BUCKSKIN

AT the end of the war Captain McKillip did "turn up" from long imprisonment at Kaskaskia, on the Mississippi. Returned to his old command at Detroit, he was immediately promoted to major. The British were so firmly intrenched in the key fortress of Niagara that they continued to hold the line of posts along the Great Lakes, and the rich Indian trade of the Northwest, for the next dozen years. As soon as he received Mrs. Guy Johnson's account of the tragic fate of Captain Lytle's family, Major McKillip asked for an indefinite leave of absence. But by the time he reached Niagara Nelly had been back on the Genesee a year.

The old fort still had its garrison, but its use now was to serve as an outpost, guarding the new town of Niagara-on-the-Lake which was growing up around Fort George, the ship-

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building yards and the military trading-post on the west bank of the river. To any subject of King George it was a heartening thing to see Tory emigrants streaming through to the garden spot of upper Canada, north of Lake Erie; and English and Scotch traders, with their French *voyageurs* and Indian carriers, trooping up and down the portage path along the Canadian bank.

A dozen years had changed the diffident youth of Fort Pitt to the confident man of thirty; and the perils of war in the Western wilderness had put to every test of manhood the handsome British officer who faced Colonel Guy with righteous anger. Why, when every other white child held in captivity had been restored to family or friends at the end of the war, had Cornplanter been allowed to keep Nelly?

"Because no one appeared to claim her and the chief refused to admit our claim. He threatened, if we took her from him, to remain on Buffalo Creek and interfere with the carrying around the falls. With a hundred thousand loyalists settling along the north shore of Lake Erie, and the posts on the upper lakes to be supplied, I could not risk that. And I do not

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blame him. Except for the Mohawks, who have been given a new home in Canada, our Iroquois allies have been shamefully treated. They have gone back to their desolated villages to make such terms as they can with their American conquerors. Cornplanter is as dangerous as a stag at bay. Until his nation is broken up and scattered he will have the power to make us trouble."

"Well, he cannot keep Nelly!" Major McKillip struck the table with his clenched fist. "The woods are full of men who would risk their lives for her. I will resign my commission and raise a force of settlers and traders to rescue her."

"If you attempt anything of the sort I will put you under arrest," Colonel Guy retorted, hotly. "Cornplanter fought for us and lost everything, and I will not permit any attack to be made upon him. Find Mrs. Lytle and I will try to persuade him to give Nelly back to her mother. It's the policy of the government to keep the friendship of the Indians. Trust the Americans to drive the tribes back to the shelter of our forts, where they will fight for us again."

Major McKillip turned a dull red, and his

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Scotch jaw shot out. "I thank God I'm a soldier, and unable to understand the diplomatic mind that would sacrifice the child of a dead friend to political expediency. I will not embarrass you, but will make this a personal matter. I'll try to find Mrs. Lytle, but in any case I'll get Nelly."

Through a dozen hard and lonely years he had cherished the memory of the fairy maid who had flung her baby arms around his neck and assured him that she loved him, "bushels and bushels." Now, in a musing surprise, he counted the time that had fled, and turned to Madame Guy: "Why, Nelly is fifteen! She must have grown to a very pretty girl."

Her eyes brimmed with quick tears. "Oh, beautiful! Better than that—sweet and brave beyond belief. Hurry, hurry back! Indeed there is no time to lose."

She gave him another image to carry away in a heart that still had "plenty of room," and alarm to speed him on his quest. And no sooner was he gone to Montreal, on the first sailing-vessel of the season, than stark fear for Nelly clutched at her heart. Major McKillip might be delayed too long. Noyeh had died at Niag-

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ara, and in an Indian town even an Indian maid of Nelly's age needed a lynx-eyed squaw to protect her. Some other plan must be set in motion.

In frantic haste she wrote to old friends long estranged by the war—to Mrs. Philip Schuyler in Albany, and to John Harris, the intrepid and sagacious trader who had founded Harrisburg. Her appeal, going by sea, was six weeks on the way to the Susquehanna. No one knew better than the Pennsylvania merchant that a man could travel faster than a letter in the wilds of America. Besides, the heart of a knight beat in his seventy-year-old breast. So he ordered his Delaware boatmen to load a fleet of canoes with goods, and announced his intention of going on a trading voyage to the Genesee.

It was on a morning late in May when he arrived at the cluster of pole and bark lodges which Cornplanter had set up on the ashes of his old town. Every one swarmed down the river bank to welcome this white friend of happier days, in whose big trading-post the Iroquois and Delawares had held many a council—every one but Nelly. John Harris had sold his goods. Now he intended to send his fur-laden boats

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back; and if he could hire a horse, and a brave or two for company, he would ride to Niagara and take ship to Montreal. He had a mind to see a bit of the world while his eyes were still good for seeing.

He had begun to fear that Cornplanter had taken alarm from the fact that the American-Iroquois peace conference was to be held at Fort Stanwix in September, and had hidden his captive in some obscure village, when he heard her blithe voice from a lodge: "Brother, I'm coming out. The world is in bloom, and I am not going to stay in all day."

So that was it—the chief kept her in seclusion when white men were about. Cornplanter hesitated now, for a moment, but decided that John Harris was old, and that he had the peaceable Pennsylvanian's talent for minding his own business. He never dreamed that Nelly was the urgent business that had brought the chivalrous trader to the Genesee.

"All right," he called. His face of gloom warmed to a smile of contentment when his little sister flung the door curtain aside and ran from the lodge. Nelly was in bloom, too. A slim maiden, as light and swift on her feet as a fawn,

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she wore a straight, sleeveless robe of yellow deer-skin girdled with the chief's choicest belt of wampum. Her golden hair was braided and banded neatly about her head in the quaint Dutch fashion which had been approved for her by Madame Guy. Curling locks escaped from the braids and blew around a face that laughed and blushed like any April day.

She stooped at her door and picking up a feather-decked head-band tossed it into the branches of a tree. "Brother," she said, with the frank concern of a child, "tell Silver Heels that if he leaves his bonnet lying around the dogs are liable to tear it to pieces."

"Some brave is paying court to her, and the child doesn't know it," John Harris reflected, and he felt his temperature rise. From under his bushy white eyebrows he watched her run to the river bank, where two young Indian braves were quarreling over a canoe. Stepping between the angry fellows she pushed them apart with a laughing rebuke.

"Go dig a hole, and talk all your bad words into it, and then bury them. If you quarrel over me I cannot go out on the river with either of you."

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Seeing that the chief needed help in sharpening a knife, she ran back to turn a grindstone for him, and to ask a question: "What makes the young men so foolish and quarrelsome?"

"Little-ship-under-full-sail, it is like the story of Oniata, the White Lily. They lay their hearts at the feet of the chief's lovely daughter."

"Oh, is that it?" She looked blank.

"You must choose one. You know what happened to the maiden who fled from all her lovers? She was bewitched into the maize-plant. And there she stands to-day, a prisoner rooted to the ground."

"I wouldn't mind," she laughed. "I'd love to dig my toes into the cool black earth, and wave my green arms in the sun. Besides, the Indians will always love that maiden for her gift of good food."

"But, Daya-danonda, you must marry some day." He gazed down upon her with wistful eyes. John Harris, busy about his boats, was too far away to hear the words, but he understood the import of all that he had seen, and his blood boiled up to the pressure of apoplexy.

"You know you don't want me to be a squaw, brother. You won't let me work in the corn-

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fields or carry a pack on the march." She shook her head with smiling decision. "I am to be the peace maiden, like Genetaska of old days. You are to build me a lodge with four doors to it, and I am to dwell there and settle the disputes of all who come with anger in their hearts."

She had the gift, and that, she knew, had been his dearest wish. But since he had learned that, at the coming peace conference, the Iroquois nations were to be broken up and scattered on small reservations, he had sunk into melancholy, with some secret apprehension in his mind.

"You would never leave me?" he pleaded.

"Where else would I go, brother?"

It was an appeal to melt a heart of stone. Was she not nameless and friendless but for him? He had only to speak, to give her up to Madame Guy, in order to restore her to her race and name. But he shut his lips stubbornly. He had lost everything else. All his mind was bent on finding some certain means of keeping Nelly.

Now she must go. She had to sit under a tree by the river, and weave a big willow basket, and watch the papooses for the squaws who

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worked in the corn-field. Like any little sailing-craft tacking in a breeze, she ran here and there on various errands. The last of them was to drop down the bank and charge John Harris with the crime of having fire-water concealed in his cargo.

"No, I have none." His shrewd and humorous eyes twinkled at her out of a weather-beaten and bearded face. "Cornplanter would have my nice gray scalp if I smuggled fire-water to his braves." Then he spoke, quick and low, "Are you afraid?"

"Why should I be?" Her blue eyes were unruffled pools.

"Be a little afraid, my dear," he said, with grave concern.

With a startled look she backed away from him and fled to her task. In the evening, at the common supper about the cooking-fire, she sat among the papooses, with her brown eyebrows drawn in a little puzzled frown. When she served the guest a bowl of food he murmured, "Can you read?"

At her nod he slipped a bit of folded paper into her hand. Caution, at least, had been awakened, for she stooped as though to tie the lacings

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of a mocassin. In the curtained corner of the lodge which she shared with the chief, she had deer-tallow candles of her own making. There she read the note.

DEAR GIRL,—I had a letter about you from Mrs. Guy Johnson. Your name is Eleanor Lytle. I knew your brave father, Captain William Lytle, of the Continental Army. He was killed in battle on his way to rescue you. A host of his friends, who supposed that you had been returned to your own people, will be at the peace conference to demand you. But you are in danger now, and must escape. In order to keep you the chief plans to marry you to one of his braves. If he cannot do that he may hide you away where you could never be found. Refuse to go on any journey with him, and guard yourself against the young braves who are in love with you. Any one of them may try to kidnap you. I am going to Niagara for help.

JOHN HARRIS.

In a breath the child died and the resolute woman was born. She seemed to grow taller, lifting her head with the proud courage of her father's race. For safety she held the paper in the candle flame, rubbed the charred flakes to powder, and blew them away.

With pain and bewilderment she had seen every white child but herself claimed at Niagara, by tragic parents or tender friends who had

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traveled hundreds of miles over wild waterways and trails. She had long ceased to believe the poetic myth the chief had used to account for his possession of her, but that belief had been displaced by the conviction that she had no family at all. Was she a waif, abandoned to the charity of Indians? Until the last moment she had expected "Danny" to come and clear up a mystery that must have blighted a spirit less buoyant and courageous. When even Madame Guy had let her go she had turned to her devoted Indian brother, lavished on him all her gratitude and affection, and begun to plan a missionary life among the ruined Iroquois nations.

Now she was somebody. She had two English names. It thrilled her to repeat them. Her soldier father had died for her. Somewhere in the world she had a mother—or was she, too, an angel in the skies? Now she must protect herself until help could come from Niagara. To ask an old squaw to watch over her would arouse suspicion. And whom could she trust? The chief worshiped her, but he had got her by some violence, and his love would have destroyed her.

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Slipping out in the dark, she took one of Cornplanter's hunting-knives down from the wall. That she could keep, on the pretext of needing it for her basket-weaving. Then she called his English mastiff that he had secured from Colonel Guy at Niagara. With the surly brute at her feet, the weapon under her hand, and Danny's "prayers for her safety and happiness" clasped to her heart, she fell asleep.

John Harris had been gone three weeks, and the waning moon of strawberries, which gleamed like a broken disk of pearl in the noon-day sky, had gone down three hours before sun. At sunset the squaws started home from the fields. Nelly had taken the bark-craddled papooses down from the tree when she heard the cry of an owl. A flock of little yellow warblers skurried by overhead to safe hiding-places, but the dog was not deceived. Heaving his bulk from the ground, he trotted toward the river bank. Something there needed to be investigated. Then she knew. It was a signal.

"Lie down!" she said, sharply. The dog obeyed, but with twitching ears and tail. When the squaws reached the tree to take up their babies Nelly was busy gathering the

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scattered willow wands into bundles, to be anchored in the water so the bark would peel easily. They offered to wait for her, but she told them to go on to the village. They were still in full view, but out of hearing, when she dropped down the bank.

The youth in the canoe which lay half concealed in osiers and rushes had his cap off in an instant. The afterglow was bright on his auburn hair that was modeled as crisply on his head as though sculptured in marble. His candid gray eyes were so full of the wonder of her that it was a moment before he spoke.

"It's Eleanor Lytle," he asserted, with the slightest of Scotch accents, a tender speech Nelly had never heard before. "Mrs. Guy Johnson described you, and there canna be another like you in the warld."

She was so happy to hear him call her by her name that her voice choked on her reply. The note which he produced from a pocket of his buckskin shirt bore the briefest of messages in a fine, sloping script:

"Nelly dear, did you think I had forsaken you? Chevalier Bayard brings this from Madame Guy and John Harris."

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"Oh! Is it Danny?" she gasped.

It was not. It was another of those knights of chivalry of whom Major McKillip himself had said that the woods were full.

"It's John Kinzie. Would you rather it had been Danny? I wouldna," he confessed.

"No. If I ever saw him I don't remember him. But he belongs; he must have known my father and mother, and given me this prayer-book, when I was a baby. So I've always thought it would be Danny who would come." She showed him the book, and she laughed and blushed for no reason at all except that young John Kinzie's steady gaze never left her face.

"We can't talk here. After dark cross the river. Go up the other bank to a small island in midstream. It's my island. No one else ever goes there. Don't build a fire. There are no animals larger than squirrels. I'll come tomorrow if I can." She was gone. He heard her call the dog, then her flying feet on the river path. The miracle had happened. His heart was full of her beauty and sweetness and the undaunted look of her.

She waited in the morning until the young braves had gone into the creeks to fish, before

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announcing her intention of going up to her island to pick strawberries. Cornplanter had forbidden her admirers to annoy her, but she was armed against any chance encounter. The dog leaped into the canoe and crouched at her feet. With the heart of a bird on its homeward flight she shot out into the current and sped up the river. Not once, all night, had she thought of Danny.

"Stay back out of sight," she called as John Kinzie ran to help her with the canoe. She dragged it up into the undergrowth herself, with a strength and grace that it was a pleasure to see. As they disappeared into a little copse walled with forest shrubs they were both tremulously aware that they were alone, for a long summer day, on a little isle of Eden anchored like a boat on the bosom of the Genesee. He had had a night of sleepless bliss in which to think of her, and his gray eyes were bright with his dream as he told her the plan of rescue.

The very next night he would drop down the river to the tree. They could paddle to the rapids by moonrise, let the boat go over the falls, and take to the portage through the pine woods along the cliffs. Another boat, with

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French voyageurs at the oars, would be in waiting, and at the mouth of the river John Harris was in command of a big sail-boat which, with a favoring wind, could make Oswego in a half-day. A note from Mrs. Guy Johnson would let them slip past the British fort and up the river and inland lake to the American garrison in Fort Stanwix.

"It's an international conspiracy," John Kinzie admitted, with a boy's delight in the adventure. "You and John Harris are rebel Americans, and Madame Guy and I are treasonable subjects of King George. But they canna hang me," he said, blithely, "and for less I care naething. John Harris will take you down the Mohawk to Albany, and Mrs. Philip Schuyler will keep you in her own home until your people can be found."

"And you?" she asked, her lips parted in sweet concern for him.

"I'll go on to Montreal for some tools and bar silver I'm needing, and then back to Niagara and Detroit. Would you write to me there? And may I come to see you next summer, wherever you are?" He felt a sudden necessity to tell her all about himself, "I'm a silversmith

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and fur-trader, with a brow of care and a *Negro* boy of my ain at twenty-one; and bourgeois to half a dozen strapping French voyageurs. I have a snug trading-post at Sandusky and another at the Maumee Rapids. Next year I mean to push out into the woods of Michigan. Traders are a rough-looking set of fellows who compare vera ill with the military officers in Detroit; but we, too, are soldiers, braving hardships and dangers—the vanguard of the army of pioneers to come."

He sprang to his feet, his fair face flushed, his head held high with honest pride. And, oh, beside being a goodly figure of young manhood for any maid to look upon—so strong and lithe, and standing so sturdily with his legs set well apart—his zest for life and his belief in the importance of his task were contagious! Nelly leaned forward and hung upon his words as he flung himself at her feet and poured out the story of his life.

His father had been a surgeon in the British army at Quebec, in the days of the old French war. His mother, left a widow, had married another Scotchman, named Forsyth, and moved to New York. There he had been put to school

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with his stepbrothers, but at thirteen, in the earliest days of the Revolution, he had run away from home, and for the foolishest reason:

"I couldna abide the Dutch. They have the name of being a thrifty folk, but they put mair cloth than is needful in their silly breeches."

When Nelly laughed her whole lovely body seemed to ripple in the wind. How sweet it was to be young and happy, undismayed by danger, and to thrill to the adventurous spirit and gay irreverence of youth. Like any homing-pigeon, he had gone up the Hudson to Quebec, and apprenticed himself to a silversmith. At sixteen his good stepfather had found him there, given him a thrashing, and marched him off to Detroit with his migrating family.

"I was fair ashamed of myself," he confessed. "It takes a thoughtless, heidstrong lad to so hurt his own mother."

"You have a mother!" she said, her blue eyes wistful with her own yearning.

He knew her tragic story as she did not. "You may share my mother. She'd love such a bonny lassie like her ain bairn." And then, presently, apropos of something in his mind:

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"Mr. Forsyth keeps the tavern. My mother bakes all the wedding-cakes in Detroit."

Nelly suddenly remembered that they must fill her basket with the little wild strawberries which gemmed every grassy glade. But that idyllic task did not stop his eager talk.

"At sixteen I set up a shop in the tavern, and in two years was out in the woods trading my silver trinkets for furs. I sell everything now but firewater, and I dinna cheat. I speak the French patois and play the violin, so I am welcome in every camp. The Indians are fair fond of me. They call me, Shaw-nee-aw-kee, the Silverman. It's a fine, friendly world to be living in."

"I have an Indian name, too. It's 'Little-ship-under-full-sail.'"

"I couldna name you better myself, except in the Scotch. That has a thousand ways of saying darling."

Abashed by his own boldness and by her blushing confusion, but in a wild exuberance of spirits, he broke into a song that, to the rollicking tune of "We won't go home 'til morning," was sung by every French-Canadian boat crew in the Northwest.

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*Malbrouck se'n va-t-en guer-re,
Ri too tra la, ri too tra la.
Malbrouck s'en va-t-on guer-re,
Ne soit-quand reviendra, la bas,
Courrez! Courrez! Courrez!
Petite fille jeune et gentille,
Courrez! Courrez! Courrez!
Venez ce soir vous a-mus-er.*

"I'll have to teach you French," he said, quite as a matter of course, when he had told her the meaning of the song. "You canna do business or be friendly with your neighbors in Canada or the West, without the patois. That: '*Courrez!*' ('Run!') is yelled by every boat crew that brings the winter's catch of furs up to Detroit in May or June. When the voyageurs shout:

Little girl, young and gentle,
Run! Run! Run!

you should see the mothers and sisters and sweethearts and wives of that little walled town run down to the wharf, each looking for her own man who has been in the woods all winter. If you were there, would I not race home and shout the loudest of all?"

"No!" she cried, impulsively. "I have lived in the fort at Niagara, and I would not be

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left behind in any little walled town. I would be out in the beautiful wilderness, too."

He would not see her again until the hour of flight, when there would be no time for speech. Afterward, with others aiding, he would not be alone with her. And once restored to her own place in the world, so far from his, he would have no chance at all. This was his one moment out of eternity. The color ebbed from his face, leaving it to the pure white fire of first love.

"Eleanor, marry me in the fort at Oswego. Darling girl, I canna do anything else than love you forever. Go into the wilderness with me. We'll do brave things together, and never feel the earth beneath our feet."

She had no answer for him; but with the landscape swimming in a rosy mist before her happy eyes, she picked up her basket and fled to the canoe.

VII

"THERE CAME TWO KNIGHTS"

NELLY was half-way home and still in a tender reverie when, fifty yards below her, a canoe shot out from a creek. Under the drooping foliage which concealed the outlet of a sluggish little stream, Silverheels had lain in ambush. He had stripped to his breech-cloth for the adventure of getting the wife of his choice by capture. His lean body gleamed in the light of the declining sun like polished bronze as he sent his frail craft rocking across the current to head off her boat.

She knew that no help could come from the village, which was still a mile away and hidden around a bend in the river. But that John Kinzie might see her peril from the island and come to the rescue, filled her with alarm. Not only would the discovery of his presence there

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betray their plan of escape, but his life and her chance of liberty might be forfeited. She must protect him and defend herself by strategy.

Scenting some danger to her, the dog bristled. "Steady, boy! Down!" she ordered, and he flattened his huge bulk in the bottom of the canoe. With a twirl of the paddle she spun the boat around, as though in a panic-stricken flight to the futile shelter of the island. Silver-heels gave a low whoop of triumph and started in pursuit. He had all but overtaken her when she whirled again and rammed his canoe, sinking it and tumbling the fellow into the water. But he was up in an instant, gripping the prow of her boat, his dark face in an evil grin. He did not see the dog, that lay crouched for a spring, but started to swim and to tow her canoe toward the creek.

She was creeping forward to strike his hand with her knife when the dog leaped. With frantic paddling she escaped from the horrible struggle in the water, and fled down a river that was flecked with bloody foam. Corn-planter had been watching for her. As he came to the bank to help her out and tie up her canoe, he missed the dog. Her eyes suddenly

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overflowed for her brave defender. Silverheels had stabbed him.

The chief stared at her a moment without comprehension. He swept the river with his eagle gaze until he saw the head of the young brave who was swimming home. In answer to a brief question, Nelly nodded. Did she want to see Silverheels punished?

"Brother, he has been punished. The dog nearly killed him. He had been drinking fire-water. It stole his brains and put evil thoughts into his heart. He'll be sober and ashamed now. I'm not afraid of him."

She clung to him with entreaty, weeping miserably, for there were terrible tales of Cornplanter's punishments. But he led her to the lodge and shut her in. That Silverheels had been drunk doubled his offense. With a blast from a boat-bugle he called every one in the village, the squaws and young girls, too, for this was their affair, to a brief council on the bank of the darkening river. Exhausted by the fight and the long swim, with one shoulder lacerated, Silverheels lifted his head to call for help, only to see his tribe sitting motionless in silent judgment upon him. He could come

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ashore, unaided, but there lay a canoe, with braves at the paddles, waiting to bear him into dishonored exile. Throwing up his arms, he sank like a stone.

After a time the chief rose to his feet. "To-night," he said, "we will sing the death-song of a brave dog who defended a maiden against a beast. We will ask the Great Spirit to call him to the chase in the happy hunting-grounds."

All the next day he went about in a state of melancholy and desperate resolve. In the evening, as he and Nelly sat by the dying fire, long after the people of the town had scattered to their lodges, the proud warrior showed her his heart of despair.

"To-morrow we are going to my big Corn-planter Island in the Alleghany River. At the peace conference I will ask the Great White Chief of the Thirteen Fires, General Washington himself, for that island, for a home for our little band. You and I are going to see if there is enough good land for corn. Daya-danonda, I will build you that lodge with four doors, and set you apart as a peace maiden. Old squaws and fierce dogs shall guard you." He suddenly threw his arms over his head in mourning, and

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cried out, in the agony of his soul: "The Senecas are to be scattered on the wind, like the ashes of their towns. We dwindle toward the grave. We have few young braves, and they are falling into corruption."

Her eyes were blurred with tears. He meant to hide her away where she would never be found, but nothing that he had done, nor the treachery he was planning now, in his fear of losing her, could make her feel anything but pity for his misfortunes. And she was secure. That very night she would be gone with John Kinzie—on the long journey of life, or only to the parting at Fort Stanwix? She did not know, yet, when she got to her feet and gave the chief the old look of trust and affection, for his remembrance through bitter and lonely years.

"Good-night, brother." She stood in the doorway of the lodge a moment for, with torches to light the way, travelers were coming in over the Niagara trail. The chief heaped pine knots on the fire to make the flames leap up in welcome. It was some visit of ceremony, a rare event in these days of poverty, for Col. Guy Johnson and another scarlet-coated officer were arriving, attended by mounted orderlies.

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Nelly dropped the door curtain and disappeared within. She lit a candle and said a prayer. Then, since she had no preparations to make, she blew it out and sat in the dark, in a throbbing wonder at the beautiful thing that had happened to her. An angry exclamation from the stranger startled her from her musings.

"Not see Nelly? I will do just that."

"Of course, Gar-yan-wah-ga, Major McKillip must see her," Colonel Guy said, persuasively. "I have promised that she should not be taken from you."

But the chief stubbornly defended his last and dearest possession. "She is my little sister. No man may see her without—"

The stranger cut across his speech, purposely loud, to reach her ears even had she been asleep: "Nelly, I have fetched your mother from Baltimore!"

In an instant she was the center of the little group, a shining apparition in the firelight. Then, "Nelly, is it you, my dear?" Her hands were gathered to his scarlet coat, and she looked up to see the steadfast love in Danny's eyes.

Colonel Guy withdrew the downcast chief to the other side of the fire. During the hour

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of quiet talk that knight without reproach of all her girlhood dreams never released her. He held her hands in his while he restored to her the home at Fort Pitt, and memories of her childhood of which she had been robbed. He told her of the day of evacuation, of the wood-pigeons, and of the homesick lieutenant who had carried the image of a baby girl away in his heart—and no one since to crowd her from her place. Some day he would tell her how she had flung her arms around his neck. Now, he spoke of his anxiety for her family, at that time, and of the gift to her at the pier.

"I have it now." She brought the little book forth eagerly. "I have always carried it. Oh, Danny, it was all I had—your name, your love, your prayers."

"Nelly dear, they are yours for always—my name, my love, my life consecrated to your safety and happiness." He lifted her hands to his lips. Her limpid eyes dwelt upon his face, so grave and sweet, but she was so far from understanding him, for the mature man had none of the unmistakable ardor of John Kinzie, that she said:

"I think my father must have been like you."

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He winced a little, for her father had been a dozen years older, and he was still in his youthful prime. But to Nelly, who was as young and dewy as any flower of spring, thirty might well seem old. "Not in the least," he said, with a warm smile for the memory of a gallant man who had won his boyish admiration. "He was very American—dark, lean and wiry, a much more dashing fellow than I. He went at every difficulty as he put his horse at a five-barred gate."

Her eyes shone with pride. "Oh, I know! That's the way he died for me. And my mother?"

"An angel of goodness and sweetness." He told Nelly how she had been stolen. "We must be very gentle with her, my dear; never let her be alarmed or grieved again. At thirty-three her hair is white. She has been broken-hearted and half out of her mind. If she ever knew where you were, she had forgotten. You were just lost—"

"Oh, brother, how could you—how could you be so cruel to my mother?" She turned upon the chief a look of grief and reproach that carried its secret sting. In stealing her in

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peace-time he had broken the Iroquois code of honor. He thought of Silverheels and his punishment. One day there would be a council in the skies to sit in judgment on himself.

"She is better now, and with our love and care, please God, she may yet have many happy years. And, Nelly, you have a brother; a manly lad of twelve, who is very like your father. And your mother has her faithful old black Mammy to nurse her. What a family for a lonely man to find, who never did anything to deserve it!"

On the long, hard journey it was plain to Major McKillip that Mrs. Lytle could never return alone; and with her mother so helpless, Nelly would need a protector at once. For him to marry her and take care of them all had seemed the natural solution, and he had only to see the beautiful maid in order to lose his heart as promptly as John Kinzie. Young as she was, and hidden away in this Iroquois village, it never occurred to him, or to her mother, that she could have seen any one else. "I talked with your mother about it, and it made her very happy, so it is arranged, and we are all to go on together to Detroit."

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Still she did not understand. Having no knowledge of social conventions, she did not know that marriages were "arranged" by careful parents for their young daughters. Since her father was dead and her mother ill, it seemed only natural and right that Danny should take the family he had loved so long under his protection, and that they should all go on to Detroit together. But that plan would be delayed.

"I've promised the chief that I would not leave him at Niagara without his permission—that I would come back with him."

"Yes, I was obliged to consent to that, not to make difficulties for Colonel Guy. If only your mother will not be too much alarmed. She is still very ill, my dear. But Cornplanter cannot hide you away. Every trail will be watched and"—with the smiling assurance of a determined and resourceful man—"I'll be running away with you again in no time."

"There will be no need of that, Danny." Nelly blushed a rosy red in the firelight, but not for the reason which he so fondly surmised. If she had been alone with him she would have told him of John Kinzie, with whom she was suddenly quite sure she must run away.

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While Cornplanter, true to his standard of hospitality, was showing these unwelcome visitors to the guest-lodge, she slipped away to her canoe. It was near midnight when she reached her hand through the jungle of osiers and rushes and laid it on John Kinzie's boat. "Follow me," she whispered, and she led the way downstream for a mile. They ran the canoes into a thicket of willows, climbed a steep bank, and dropped down into a tangled ravine. There was starlight for him to see her transfigured face when she looked up from his breast.

"Oh, John! To think of finding my mother and you in the same hour! She is at Niagara, and the chief is to take me to see her to-morrow, so I cannot go with you to-night. But listen!" She grasped his shoulders, and while she shook him with tender violence, her laughter bubbled up through a gush of happy tears. "He made me promise to come back with him, and I was glad. I'd go a hundred wild leagues to run away with you."

His arms were around her, his lips on hers, their young hearts in a tumult. Then a flood of confidences and eager plans again: "I'll tell mother how it is—with us—and she'll be glad,

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too. We'll soon go back to Niagara together, and take her and my little brother and her old black Mammy with us to Detroit. And I'll have you!" with an ecstatic squeeze, "I'll have a whole family, who never had anyone! And John; will you mind, dear? I must stay with my mother in the town."

"I'd have left you there, anyhow," he admitted, for sober second thoughts had corrected his first rash impulse. "I was 'aff my heid' as my mother would say, to think of taking you into the woods. It is only voyageurs who take their Indian wives. But it is not in the town that you will live. French farmers are moving across the Strait into Canada, and are selling their good old houses and fields, which front the river like a village street for the whole eight miles out to Grosse Pointe. I'm a thrifty Scot with a bit laid by, and my bonny leddy shall have her picket-fenced garden, with roses and strawberries, and apple and pear and cherry trees," punctuating each delectable item with a kiss, and hurrying on with his lavish program of life:

"I'll leave my Black Jim to manage the farm, and buy a Pawnee Indian slave or two. And

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I'll be home a third of every year. When you hear that song:

*Petite fille jeune et gentille,
Courrez! Courrez! Courrez!*

you'll run to the wharf to meet me. And all summer long I'll work at my trinkets in a bit shop in the house by day, and by night we'll live in a canoe on the river, with the moonlight and a violin."

"Danny will be there, too. He found my mother and fetched her from Baltimore. And I was right—he 'belongs.' He knew and loved us all when I was a baby. And who do you think he is? Major Daniel McKillip of the British army, and stationed at Detroit." She was so happy that she could tease him. "In his scarlet and gold, and coming in on a foaming charger with outriders, he looked much more like Chevalier Bayard than you did in your shabby buckskins and bark canoe."

"Yes, I know him, but he wouldna be knowing me." His heart sank to his boots, for the handsome bachelor officer was a social lion in Detroit. Though he was hot with jealousy and fearful of losing her, in honesty he must tell her. At the rudest Western post, in those days of

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British occupation, neither a rich trader nor one as well born as John Kinzie ranked with the military. "You wouldna have to be in Detroit mair than one day, sweetheart, to see the difference between being my wife and ane o' the garrison ladies. Major McKillip will be wanting to marry you his ainsel."

"You foolish boy," she said, with the merriest laugh. "Danny's just a big, kind brother to our whole family, as he has always been. That's the way I'm going to love him, and you mustn't be so silly. A garrison lady, indeed! I've seen the poor thing at Niagara. She's a caged bird, proud and idle and lonely, and with no heart to sing. And I won't have my lover abused—even by you." He kissed and kissed the gay, protesting hand that she laid upon his mouth. Then, with the innocent fervor of any dryad of those woodland haunts, she said: "John, oh John! It will take you a lifetime to call me all the thousand Scotch names for darling, so begin now!"

With light hearts they parted, he to speed down the river. With John Harris he would hurry to Niagara, to see the meeting between Nelly and her mother. Then, when Cornplanter

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brought her back to the Genesee, he and his dear old friend would return at once for the romantic elopement to Oswego.

It was almost moonrise when Nelly slipped back into the lodge, so happy that she had no wish to sleep, but only to lie, starry-eyed in the dark, and remember— But she did fall into a blissful, dreaming doze, to be shocked awake by something which recurred to her mind with a new significance. Danny had lifted her hand to his lips, as was the courtly custom of true knights with their ladies, in all the tales of chivalry which Madame Guy had told her. And what was it he had said?

“Nelly dear, they are yours for always—my name, my love, my life consecrated to your safety and happiness.”

But being a simple forest maid, quite unschooled in the ways of the world, and with no vanity at all, she was presently able to explain the matter to herself. He had meant that, since her father was dead and he a lonely man, he would take that forlorn little family for his own. He had talked it over with her mother, arranged everything, and made that sad lady happy. Until the breaking of the beautiful

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June morning on which she was to ride away to Niagara, she lay thinking of the moment when she could tell that dear mother of her love and her lover.

At the end of the war Cornplanter had refused to go back to his desolated village empty-handed. He had secured all necessary seeds, tools, animals and hunting supplies; and for himself and his little sister he had demanded rich dress that they might not be shamed on occasions of ceremony. So it was in the barbaric splendor of the Senecas' most prosperous days that the chief and Princess Nelly rode to Niagara.

She remembered the frantic haste with which mothers had stripped the children, who had been restored to them at Niagara, of their Indian garb, and begged the chief to let her wear a plain, blue homespun frock. But, no! All those white people, her own mother, too, must see how he had honored and cherished her. She was so sorry for him that she could deny him nothing, so she decked herself in red broadcloth and blue silk and palest fawnskin, all crusted and fringed with beadwork and silver; and into the two long golden braids which hung over her shoul-

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ders she wove strings of white and purple wampum.

They stopped on the edge of the woods east of the old fort, to camp for the night, while Colonel Guy and Major McKillip rode on with their escort and crossed the river. Everything was done by the politic successor of Sir William to make the occasion one that Cornplanter could remember with pride. Mounted on his big white horse, heron-plumed and draped in a gold-laced blanket, with Nelly on her long-tailed pony beside him, his arrival on the river bank had all the arrogance of his spectacular entry of Johnson Hall of ten years before. And there was to be no appearance of coercion. He was to fetch his little sister and take her away at his own good pleasure.

With the dignity of a Roman emperor Cornplanter dismounted and handed Nelly into a decorated canoe. Slowly, like any royal barge, the boat was paddled across the wide stream by his handsomest young braves. He held her hand all the way, his clasp tightening with emotion as the shining white walls of Fort George suddenly blossomed with banners and blared with military music. Vessels anchored

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in the harbor dipped their colors to him; a gun fired a salute; soldiers poured out of the gate and formed ranks; and the mixed population of Niagara-on-the-Lake, with the transient traders, voyageurs and Indian carriers, flocked to the parade-ground.

Nelly's eyes found John Kinzie and John Harris on the edge of the crowd. But suddenly she saw nothing besides a little group at the top of the bank above the pier. There was a boy—dark, lean, wiry; oh, very American—waving his cap in the air. And behind him Colonel and Madame Guy, and Danny and the turbaned Negress, all supporting a white-crowned, black-garbed lady, out of whose pale, distracted face blue eyes stared—

Nelly was out of the boat before it touched the bank, splashing through the water and running up the grassy slope. Without any sound at all her mother fainted in her arms.

A little space was made to lay Mrs. Lytle on the grass. A surgeon knelt there, and Madame Guy dropped her black silk mantle over Nelly's startling costume. It was such a cloudless day of blue and gold as when Cornplanter stole a child from under the walls of Fort Pitt. And

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Mrs. Lytle, opening her eyes, started as from that dreaming doze under the apple-tree, and cried in fright:

“Nelly, are you there, dear?”

“Yes, darling mother. Where would I be, but here with you?” It was a vibrant young voice in her ears, a face of valiant love to reassure her, the arms of a strong and beautiful daughter around her.

Men took off their hats; soldiers winked bright drops away; women sobbed, and children hid their heads against their mothers and cried aloud. Complanter stood on the bank, as impassive as any statue, his arms folded in his blanket. Madame Guy regarded him steadily. She knew there was softness in that bronze—for Nelly, a conscience, a code by which he struggled to live. She waited in the hope that he would signal to her, as he did, presently, with the slightest turn and bend of the head.

“You will never tell my little sister that I killed her father?”

“No, there is no need of that.”

He stared at a vessel that was bursting into a cloud of snowy sails, and at the white-capped waves of Lake Ontario, sparkling in the sun.

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"But if you take her away now, you will kill her mother. She would know that."

His breast heaved. It was something elemental, like the lifting and breaking up of ice by a flood of waters underneath. "Dayadanonda," he called. Nelly sprang to her feet and turned, remembered her promise, and flung out her arms in appeal. He gazed on her, as one looks his last upon the beloved dead. With one foot in the boat he waved his hand in renunciation.

"Good-by, Little-ship-under-full-sail. I go back to my lonely lodge."

VIII

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IT was three days before Nelly could lay her head on the pillow beside her mother's, and with a heart overflowing with happiness confess her secret. For the first time the doctor, the good black Mammy, Madame Guy and Major McKillip had gone out and left them alone in the pretty, chintz-draped room in Colonel Guy's house within the fort. In a girlish gown and fichu of ruffled mull, and with a blush rose in golden hair, Nelly flitted about, putting the place in order; and Mrs. Lytle's eyes followed this grown-up daughter who was still so strange and sweet, so unbelievable that every waking was in apprehension lest she should have been snatched away again.

She gave a gasping sigh even when a servant called Nelly to the door to deliver a whispered message. Mr. Kinzie was in the drawing-room.

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He had inquired for Mrs. Lytle, and asked if Miss Eleanor could see him. Morning and evening this attractive young man had called every day, only to be denied. When Nelly, blushing like any wild rose, sent back word that her mother was better, and if Mr. Kinzie could wait she would be down to see him, the Negro slave girl smiled in sympathy and hurried away.

Oh, he would wait, and presently she would go flying down to fetch him up! Together they would kneel by that dear mother's bed for a blessing on their love. She turned at once and, lying down beside her, drew her mother into her arms. The doctor had said that she could talk a little about cheerful things—nothing to agitate or distress her. And what could make the stricken lady so in love with life as to know that Nelly was to be safe and happy with a brave and devoted young husband?

"Mother dear, I have something so sweet to tell you. I have a true knight. Madame Guy sent him to rescue me. He—we just looked at each other and lost our hearts. He is to make a home for us all in Detroit. He wants to see you now and love you. His name—"

Then Mrs. Lytle said the strangest thing,

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smiling faintly, and kissing away the happy tears that brimmed in Nelly's eyes: "I know his name, darling dear." For how could she know, since no one knew besides her and John! There was nothing more for moments, while the poor lady struggled for breath and Nelly held her up. When she could speak again she hurried on, like one hastening to eternity and pressed for time: "He has always loved you—since you were a baby. A British officer, he will be able to protect you. I am glad that you love him. Danny belongs to the old happy days."

Nelly's heart all but stopped beating. Her mother was talking of Danny, and her own words had described him, for Madame Guy had sent two knights to her rescue. This was what had been "arranged." She lay there inert for a moment, and with that other heart fluttering like a frightened bird under her ear, she knew that she could never explain. Indeed, while she held her, her mother sank back, her eyes half closed, a gray pallor like a veil spreading over her face. She must have cried out for help, for the doctor hurried in. It was an agonized hour before she remembered to send word to John

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Kinzie that her mother was very low again and that she could not see him.

It was toward evening when a band of Mohawks, who had trooped up the portage path from the falls under the hot June sun, dropped their loads in the factor's warehouse, and with wild whoops ran down to the beach for a swim in the lake. At that dread sound Mrs. Lytle screamed, the old terror gripping her failing heart. "Nelly, are you there, dear?" and she clutched at the precious daughter as though life itself was slipping from her.

"Yes, mother darling. It's nothing but tired carriers shouting because the day's work is done." Major McKillip ran down to give orders that the boisterous braves and voyageurs must be quiet. With blue and quivering lips Nelly asked an inaudible question. "Oh, doctor, will she die?"

"I hope not, this time, my dear. But she has had a severe shock—joy can kill—and her recovery will be slow. But with care and a tranquil life she should live for years."

All that day and night life hung by the slenderest thread, and Nelly sat beside her mother, withdrawn into a world of bewilder-

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ment and grief, herself and her love for John Kinzie forgotten in a passion of pity and devotion. When her lover came again in the evening and the morning he was told that no message could be delivered.

Another day had gone by when Mrs. Lytle seemed to come back from another world to spread her wings over the long-lost daughter. She asked for Danny, and when Major McKillip bent over her she whispered: "The ring—the ring!" and that frantic plea was not to be denied. He knelt with Nelly and slipped the gray pearl in its antique setting that had been his mother's betrothal ring onto her finger. "Now you are safe." With a gentle sigh Mrs. Lytle fell asleep.

It was an hour before her clasp of their hands relaxed and the major could raise his pale fiancée to her feet and lead her to a cushioned window-seat. "Nelly dear," he murmured, with the tenderest compassion for her youth, "I did not intend that you should be hurried like this. It is the privilege of every maid to be wooed and won."

"It's all right, Danny." She looked up bravely and with gratitude and affection into

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the face of the truest gentleman and faithfulest friend in the world. "If you will just give me a little time."

"Take all the time you need, my dear." He could wait, and without importunities, with no misgivings that he could not win her heart. "Try to sleep a little. We may have to be up in the night." He saw that Mammy was watching beside her mistress, arranged some pillows under Nelly's head, kissed her cheek and left the room with her excited little brother. Already it was a household wrapped around with Danny's love and care.

A casement window was open to the soft summer evening. She was lying there, looking out over Lake Ontario, so dark under the starlight—the same faint starlight that had shone into a ravine on the Genesee where she had kept a tryst with love only a week before, when the slave girl spoke to her. Mr. Kinzie was in the drawing-room and begged, if it were possible, that she would see him.

She fled down the stairs to him, closed the door, and stood with her back against it, to guard their unhappy love from discovery. Even in that moment she noticed how hand-

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some he looked in evening clothes of some delicate, neutral color, with lawn ruffles and silver buckles. His face was haggard with a week of baffled effort to see her and to serve her in her trouble.

"Sweetheart, how worn you look! If I canna see your mother, let me do something for her. When she is able to travel we will be married here and take her home." He would have put his arms around her, to comfort her, but the blind way in which she spread her hands before her to ward him off checked his eager speech and made him turn paler still with apprehension. By the light of candles in the silver sconces on the wall, he caught the gleam of the pearl ring.

"Married? Oh, God, Eleanor, don't tell me you are married!"

"No, not married; but I must marry Major McKillip soon—whenever my mother wishes." Her low, hurried, heartbroken words came to him through a vast confusion that seemed to fill the world. "I tried to tell her, but she thought I was talking about Danny. She was afraid she would die and I be left unprotected, so she arranged the marriage for me. It will

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not be possible to tell her anything, nor for her to see you. A strange face, a strange name, frightens her. Oh, John, she's like a little scared and dying child!"

"I canna bear it!" he cried out.

"Yes, you can. I can bear it. But life has hurt her so cruelly and for so long that she can bear no more. Our love has no rights above my duty to my mother. Do you think we could bear our happiness if I should refuse and she should die?"

Her courage was a flaming thing that kindled his own sense of right and power of sacrifice. "No, that would be blighting. But do not tell me that I must not love you. I canna do anything else so long as I live." His look lingered on her as though he would fill his heart with her beauty, her sweetness and her bright bravery, but he did not so much as touch her hand before he passed through the door.

It was early in October, and the grove-dotted prairies which rolled away from the Strait to the forest were ablaze with autumn colors when John Kinzie returned to Detroit. The flat country, the windmills, and the water craft

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made at this gateway to the wild trade of the Northwest a landscape to be seen elsewhere only in Holland. The palisaded town perched above the wharves, and the orderly street of narrow farms which fronted the river half-way up to Lake St. Clair, formed a settlement as French as any on the St. Lawrence. The fort and the military government were British; but the democratic and adventurous spirit of the place was as American as that of any boom mining town of the far West of a later day. There was a small, aristocratic class of old French families and officers of the garrison, but this was quite submerged in early summer, when the loot of the forest was brought in, and again in the fall, when hundreds of English, Scotch and Irish traders, French voyageurs and boat crews, and Indian hunters gathered there to outfit for their long winter in the woods.

John Kinzie had timed his return when no garrison lady would venture into the riotous streets. Nor was he likely to hear of Major McKillip's young wife, for in the rush of business the romantic marriage that had been a nine days' wonder would be forgotten. The King's

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Wharf was piled high with goods, and a cargo was being loaded into every canoe, bateau and Mackinac boat in the harbor pool. And when he had climbed the steps and gone through the gate at the foot of Honoré Street, he found a motley crowd surging through the dozen narrow thoroughfares of the town.

Every one was in elegant, picturesque, fantastic or primitive garb, most white men as bronzed as the red, and smelling equally of peltries, bilge-water and camp smoke. The wives and daughters of men grown rich in trade, dressed in the latest fashion of Paris, watched the mob from the shelter of rude piazzas which stood flush with the squared logs that had been laid for footways; but the gallants who steered them over crossings were in buckskins, with hooded and belted blanket coats, and they bristled with small arms and hunting-knives. British officers were jostled even by Negro slaves who were hurrying on errands. Tall and mournful Ottawa braves, shrouded in blankets, leaned against every wall of hewn logs, and their squaws were everywhere underfoot, vending baskets, grass mats and elkskin leggings and moccassins. And in the dormer

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windows which jutted from the long slope of barked or thatched roofs, shrill-voiced women gossiped with their neighbors in two languages and a dozen dialects.

Slapped on the back by boisterous friends, hailed with shouts, and greeted by laughing girls who called down from the dormers, John Kinzie was a half-hour in making his way the few short blocks to Forsyth's Tavern, which then stood at the west end of Ste. Anne Street, near the old French barracks and Indian council-house.

Between-meals the public room of the tavern was quieter than Ste. Anne's Church, to which every good Catholic went to confess his sins before going into the woods. The lower half of the green-painted Dutch door was closed, to keep out stray dogs and papooses. With the freedom of a son of the house, John Kinzie vaulted over it and surprised his mother, who was directing the work of Pawnee Indian slave girls around the huge fireplace. She held him away at arm's-length to take a good look at him and to scold him a bit.

"Ye war lang awa', Johnny; an' noo ye'll be gangin to the woods. Ye look aulder. What

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ails ye, laddie?" She was a Lowland Scotch woman of sturdy build, not over forty, and with his own candid gray eyes. He never could look at her brown hair, in which his thoughtless, boyish escapade had put many a thread of white, without shame.

"Been seeing the world with John Harris. It ages a man." He had his old, dry humor, but there was no merriment in his smile and he wore an air of sad preoccupation not to be expected in a youth who had been on a pleasure journey.

"It isna that. Ye canna pu' the wool ower a mither's een." But she questioned him no more, for well she knew that a young man must get some hurts that he must not bring to his mother. "For a' ye are so magerfu', ye are juist a bairn like Geordie. An' wee Geordie is gangin the same gait as wee Johnny. He's a' for rinnin' awa' to the Common aboon the fort."

"No harm in that. Cows and pigs and ponies are safe company for the lad. How's the mannie?" He lifted his four-year-old half-brother, Geordie Forsyth, to his knees, and pulled a gay velvet and tartan cap with a jaunty feather from the little tousled red head.

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It was good to be in this homely room again, where savory kettles were being stirred and spits turned, and the smoke-darkened beams were hung with hams, haunches of venison, strings of dried pumpkin and hanks of yarn. His sore heart was eased by his little brother's scuffling play, and by his mother's affection and her talk of simple things. He thought it a kindness to make light of her fears.

"Geordie is trying to run away from his long, red hair. I know, from bitter experience, you vain woman. Cut his hair, mother!"

"That I wullna do. I couldna find him ava, wi'oot his Hieland bonnet and his red top-knot." Only the week before Geordie had gone across the Common into the swamp, where the rank and poisonous growth was higher than his head.

This was serious. John Kinzie stood the little fellow squarely on his moccasined feet and held him firmly by the shoulders. "You must never do that again, mannie. There are wolves in the woods."

"Aye, the beasties mak' a braw noise at nicht." He wasn't afraid of their howling.

"Sometimes one comes 'by his lane.' He

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doesna howl, but carries away a stray pig or calf."

Geordie chuckled. He was born lucky. Some one who was out there on a pony had followed him into the swamp and fetched him home. "I was a' fine an' mucky." The mother added some details, and the comment:

"Aye, but she's bonny."

"Who?" for John, absorbed in the problem of Geordie, had not been attending.

"Major McKillip's young leddy. She lives oot that way in ane o' thae new hooses on the prairie east o' the fort. It's like a manse, wi' its white picket fence an' posy-beds. She's nae mair than a lassie her ainsel', the bonny dawtie. Are ye weary, laddie?"

"A bit. The lake was rough and I didna sleep." He had closed his eyes and leaned his head upon his hand, but now he sat erect again, hungry for news of her.

"She didna ken him ava, but when I gied my name she cried oot: 'You Mrs. Forsyth—you his mither?' 'Aye, I'm Geordie's mither,' I said. She went awa' i' the gloamin' pale as ony wraith, saying her ain mither wad worry gin she didna come in. But she had tea wi'

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me so cozy neist day. She isna prood like maist o' the garrison leddies. When I said it was a wae to me that, wi' three stepsons, a' my lassies war laddies, she kissed me twa-three times. Wi' nae mither ava for mony a year she could do wi' anither gin I'd hae her. She hasna been again, but she keeps an ee on the bairns o' the toon when they're oot on the Common."

The big brother looked very white and concerned about Geordie, and sat staring at the small culprit until he remembered to ask about his Negro boy. He must set Black Jim to work loading a boat, and find a man to take charge of one of his trading-posts. He was out in a great bustle of business to the guard-house near Ste. Anne's Church and Pontiac's gate, a favorite lounging-place for French-Canadian woodsmen. There he hailed a strapping fellow in buckskins, a red woolen sash and red, tasseled cap.

"Hey there, Louis Pirie! *Attendez vous!* Am I your *bourgeois* this winter?"

"*Oui, M'sieu John, oui!* You bet! I wait long tam for you, by gosh!" He cut a caper in the air and would have saluted his young employer, but John Kinzie clapped two determined hands upon him.

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"None of that, *mon brave!* I will not be kissed. Get an eight-man boat and a crew that can make two round trips to Sandusky before November. Hire your own *coureurs de bois*. I'll see to getting the goods down to the Maumee."

"But, M'sieu John, Sandusky is for you—near beeg Wyandot ville. The Maumee is ver' wild, ver' solitaire."

"It's your luck this winter, Louis." He had intended to go to the Maumee in any case, for he thought a better trade could be built up in the swampy valley which was full of beaver creeks. Now he wanted to be 'ver' solitaire,' with not even a dog to witness his misery. But, as he had wasted his summer in vain regrets, he would be obliged to work at his trade in the woods, so he took Black Jim to do the squaw chores.

He got away under a dark and windy sky, to find Lake Erie in a leaden heave. There were three days of storm, and for a week after he reached the Maumee the sullen flood and gloomy forest were veiled in drizzling rain. He had taken possession of an old log store that, built on the high bank overlooking the falls, had been used and abandoned by a number of unsuccess-

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ful traders. After a month of toil he made the place a little less squalid than an Indian wigwam. A rude fur-press had to be built; puncheon tables and shelves, and gun and tool-racks set up; and the bunks in the sleeping-closet scrubbed, filled with marsh grass, and spread with clean deerskins and blankets. Indians began to come in for hunting supplies before his goods were ready for display. Then packs had to be made up for his *coureurs de bois*, who went out over the forest trails to buy and sell for him in the camps of red hunters.

It was December before he could get out his locked chest of silver, his crucibles and tools, candles and blow-pipe. On mild days he set his work-bench by the open door, and kept the Negro at some task outside in order to be alone. One day he laughed aloud at his insane notion of bringing Eleanor Lytle to this hut in the "beautiful wilderness." But the very certainty that she would have come, "a hundred wild leagues" to be with him, made his loss of her a more poignant anguish. In some magic way she would have created a home of comfort and cheer, and filled it with brave and laughing dreams.

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And then he was given the grace to know that, wherever she was, her house of life would be so furnished. It shamed him to think how she was "bearing it." A wild bird parted from her mate, she could still sing in the cage of a garrison lady, share his mother, comfort her whose lassies were all headstrong laddies, and between the bars look out and "keep an eye on the straying bairns" of the little walled town. He must bear his hurt better, do his appointed task, and serve his time. So the spirit of her did come there to dwell with him.

Just his work—his delicate craftsmanship claiming all his attention—brought him some hours of ease every day. No such beautiful, hand-wrought ornaments of coin silver had ever been offered in the forest trade of the Northwest as Shaw-nee-aw-kee, the Silverman's; and no Indian could wear them without respecting and trusting the man who had made them. Red hunters often traveled a hundred miles out of their way to fetch choice beaver or fox skins to trade for coveted brooches, bracelets, crosses, half-moons or ear-rings; and it was a matter of pride to establish credit with him. So he was not surprised, one day, to see a strange brave

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who promised to pay for hunting supplies with pelts. He said he was a Miami from the Auglaize River, and his name was Beaver Tail.

"I think you are a Shawnee from the Scioto," John Kinzie said, coldly, for he knew every dialect of the region. "Why do you not go to Sandusky where you are known?" He discovered the reason, presently, when he consulted the accounts which Louis Pirie had kept the year before. Scrawled on loose sheets of brown wrapping-paper, they were plain enough to a man who could read a mixture of ill-spelled English, Canadian French and Indian signs. What John Kinzie found there made him turn with anger on the impudent scamp.

"You're a Shawnee. Your name is *Courbe Nez* [Crooked Nose]. Louis Pirie supplied you here last year, and you sold your furs elsewhere." Indeed it was Louis's opinion that the man was a liar, a thief, a skunk, an *enfant du diable* and "un dam raskil." "You can have no more credit until you have paid your debt."

The sulky Indian made no defense, but he was hungry. John Kinzie filled his pouch with parched corn and jerked venison, and watched him until he disappeared. He probably had a

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last charge in his gun, and as the woods were thick and the day foggy it would be easy for him to skulk among the trees and shoot from ambush.

But only a fearless man had any chance at all in that wild trade, so John Kinzie sat at his task again, his little anvil gripped between his knees and his back to the door.

The sun came out enough to cast a shadow on the floor. He dodged in time for a tomahawk to fly past his head and bury its blade in the farther wall. He felled the savage with his anvil, and shouted for Black Jim. Together they tied their captive securely and flung him into a canoe. A week later the trader was alone when three Shawnee hunters stalked in and asked if he had seen *Courbé Nez*.

"Yes, I saw him. He paid me a visit. My negro boy and a voyageur took him up to Detroit to have his jaw mended in the military hospital. There is the tomahawk with which he tried to kill me."

They threatened him, with angry cries: "You have sent him to prison. We will kill you and steal your goods and burn your store to the ground."

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He turned to replenish the fire before he answered them. "I have made no complaint against *Courbé Nez*. But I have hidden a writing where it will be found if you harm me, telling his crime, his tribe and his village. He would be hanged, and you would all be outlaws of the woods. Would you pay such a price for a murderous thief? I advise you to take his tomahawk home and confront him with it when he returns."

He gave no further attention to them, but sat down at the delicate craft which always won the fascinated admiration of every Indian artisan. These visitors forgot their anger in watching him reduce a wire by pulling it through a hole in a draw-plate, fuse silver filings and affix a pin, and polish a hammered brooch to a gleaming whiteness on a wheel buffer. After a time they began to make excuses for *Courbé Nez*. Made drunk, and cheated by a dishonest trader, he had turned sour and revengeful. John Kinzie laid down his tools.

"I dinna cheat nor sell fire-water." And then he remembered that, when he had said this to Eleanor Lytle, on that day of Elysium on the island in the Genesee, she had expected

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more of him than mere honesty and a refusal to profit by corrupting his neighbors. "Oh, John, be friendly with them in ways they can understand."

He called Black Jim to prepare supper, and invited these wayfarers to a feast and a smoke. Then, standing in the firelight, he sang the old French-Canadian chansons and played on his violin. He was sorry he could not offer shelter. He would set up a bark guest-lodge at once, and next year he would have a good bunk-house for travelers. They slept by a camp-fire, and before they departed the next morning they promised that *Courbe Nez* should return and pay his debt.

IX

THE GARRISON LADY

TO the wilderness travelers he entertained that winter John Kinzie never played "Malbrouck" on his violin; and it was all he could bear to hear his own boat crew shout the chorus when he went up to Detroit in May. He remained in the town only long enough to sell his furs and to place his orders for goods for the next season. Then, engaging workmen to rebuild and enlarge his trading-post, he returned to the Maumee. It was not until the end of the next summer that he saw that "little girl, young and gentle," again.

He had spent the season in Montreal, perfecting himself in his handicraft. Woods-men had not begun to come in when he reached Detroit, but the river swarmed with canoes from the Indian villages and the St. Clair fisheries, and in Ste. Anne Street a

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mob of braves, squaws, and papooses was moving toward the old council-house. From the tail end of the procession Geordie hailed him.

"Hae, ye got the braw booties, Johnny?" For the big brother had promised to fetch him a pair of Hessian boots of the most military proportions and grandeur.

They went on to the tavern hand in hand, and as no one else was in the public room, Geordie sat on the floor to try the boots. Bought extra large so he would not soon outgrow them, the laddie "kenned weel" that he would be the envy of all the small boys who went to the Dame School near the fort. Armored in cow-hide to the knees, he could defy the snakes in the swamp.

"If you do mother will hide the boots and your father will give you a licking."

Geordie stamped about noisily, and wished passionately that he was an Indian boy, so he could live in the woods and "gang whaur he liket."

"A papoose doesn't go where he pleases. I know, for I've been one."

It was young Mrs. McKillip who spoke from

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the doorway of Mrs. Forsyth's private sitting-room, and with the voice of authority, for she had on the costume of an Iroquois princess that she had worn at Niagara. Geordie danced around her with whoops of delight. When the fire was low the place was so ill-lighted from the half-door and small windows that it was more than a moment before she recognized Geordie's companion. The child's excitement let their sudden pallor pass unnoticed; and presently John Kinzie was bowing low, and she was dropping a pretty courtesy in acknowledgment of a formal introduction by the happy mother, who said:

"Laddie, ye'll juist gang the stap or twa to the council-hoose wi' the major's young leddy, an' tell thae puir heathen bodies what she talks aboot."

"I need an interpreter, Mr. Kinzie, if you will be so kind. I do not know the Western dialects."

She explained that her fame as Princess Nelly of the Senecas had gone abroad among these tribes who had known Cornplanter when he was a proud young warrior fighting with Pontiac. Pottawattomies, Ottawas and Wyandots had taken to skulking around her house to see or to

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have a word with her. That had alarmed her mother, so she had sent word that they must stay away and she would come to them. She had had to dress at the tavern to keep her mother from knowing about it. Covering the gaudy splendor with a long black silk mantle, she went out with him into the bright sunshine of the deserted street.

"The commander of the fort could have stopped the annoyance," he said.

"I know, but I could not deny them. The poor Indians have so little innocent pleasure. And I think if there was a friendlier spirit, living on these wild frontiers would be safer and happier for every one."

He saw his own life and opportunity in a new and magic light. While he told her about his social service at his trading-post, his practice of the Indians' own virtue of hospitality, she listened with such eager interest, her face flushed, her blue eyes uplifted and dwelling on his, that they failed to notice when they had taken the "stap or twa," and so passed the open door of the council-house. With conscious embarrassment they turned back in silence and entered the barn-like log building.

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In that crowd of tall Ottawas she was such a fairy child that a number of benches were brought together to make a raised platform. John Kinzie mounted it beside her, and for half an hour he translated her talk about the intimate life of the great Iroquois chief in whose lodge she had grown up. She told them that he was living in exile with his small band on Cornplanter Island in the Alleghany River. She meant to send him a writing about this gathering. It would make him happy to know that he was remembered by the warriors of Pontiac.

Hundreds of Indians crowded around her, asking endless questions, laughing at her stories of comical happenings, listening with rapt attention to a poetic legend. The squaws examined her elaborately decorated costume, and she assured them that she had made it herself. Then they all streamed out into the warm summer dusk to their boats, to spread reports of the afternoon's pleasure, and in their grateful memories to couple the names of Princess Nelly and the Silverman.

On the way to the tavern young Mrs. McKillip spoke of her concern for the venturesome

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children of Detroit. Some child was missing every week, and until he was found the town was in a panic of fright. "I wish some one could say to them, as John Harris said to me, 'Be a little afraid, my dear.' Indian papooses grow up in a wholesome fear of the perils which surround them, and seldom come to harm. There is a difference in discipline. They do not stray from under the watchful eyes of the squaws. If I had children I could take them into the wildest woods."

They both turned pale and silent in the realization that there was peril for them in the most casual meeting and impersonal talk. He lifted his hat in a formal bow, and she watched him go down the darkening street before she turned into the tavern. She had grown up in the wilderness, but her mother's old black Mammy waited to see her safely home across the little walled town and the parade-ground of the fort.

Within another year John Kinzie sold his two good stores for a price that would set him up in business in Honoré Street. It was the ambition of every trader in the region to become a merchant in Detroit, wearing a tricorn beaver hat, buckled shoes and sedately colored broad-

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cloth every day, and taking pelts in payment for supplies over a respectable counter. Traders were eager for his good trinkets; and it was his mother's wish that he should settle down into this safe and comfortable way of living and give her a daughter-in-law like Major McKillip's young leddy.

"I ken there isna another like her," she admitted, with a sigh.

"And I couldna be contented with second best," he said, with his pleasant smile that had no merriment in it.

"I miss you sair, laddie," was her gentle plea.

"Mother, I canna abide the town." Bitterly sorry to disappoint her, he kissed her with such a sad finality that she urged him no more. Buying some pack-ponies to carry a camping outfit, and taking Louis Pirie and Black Jim with him, he spent the summer in the woods of western Michigan, looking into the chances of profitable trading on the St. Joseph.

With the defeat of Pontiac, French traders had deserted the country, and he found only one Englishman in the valley. William Burnett's big trading-post was stationed where the river widened and gathered its floods to pour

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into Lake Michigan. With its timber stockade and loopholed block-house, it was like a little fort. He had to batter at the gate, and shout his name and business to gain admittance. But the trader was glad enough to see a man who spoke his own tongue, and warned him that any subject of Great Britain was unpopular in a region which was still very French. Although he himself had taken a Pottawattomie squaw, the sister of Chief Topenebe, he had won little more than tolerance. Many Indians and white trappers took their furs up to the Grand River, or around the head of the lake to French traders on the Chicago River, rather than have any dealings with him.

"Then you would think it unfriendly of me to try to cut into your hard-earned trade?"

"You will not cut into it if you will locate far enough inland. Go up-stream about sixty miles to where the portage path starts southward across the *Parc aux Vaches* to the Kankakee. A big trade centered there in French days. The post was then at Fort St. Joseph, fifteen miles below the portage.

"I saw the ruins on a high bank, coming down the river. Any one there now?"

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"Only an old woman of a missionary priest. He won't interfere with you. But you must be prepared to defend yourself and your property against the villainous Indians and French half-breeds who infest these woods."

On his way up the river he stopped at the old fort. Built first by La Salle more than a century before, it was a monument to the dream of empire of the undespairing Norman. No man of John Kinzie's imagination could look upon it without a thrill. The empire was still here, to be won again by bold men of another breed.

The gate was down, the stockade crumbling, many timber roofs fallen in, but the chapel was in repair and wreathed in forest vines, the garden flourished, and an aged Recollet friar was sheltered in the Intendant's dismantled house. The missionary, whose parish covered a hundred leagues of forest, was eager in his welcome of even a heretic trader who might lure his vagabond flock back to the river, within hearing of his vesper bell. . And he was concerned about this attractive young adventurer.

*"Mon fils, if you come commit yourself to the care of *le bon Dieu*."*

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"Mr. Burnett thinks I should commit myself to a fort, an arsenal and a squaw," John Kinzie answered, with dry humor, but he added, seriously, "I dinna care to live on such terms with my neighbors."

"*Mon fils*, you came in answer to prayers that friendship for the red tribes might return to the Saint Joesph."

This river valley was, indeed, the beautiful wilderness to which he could have wished to bring his brave lady. For miles the broad, winding stream was bordered by those wet pastures which the earliest French explorers called the *Parc aux Vaches*—"Parkovash" in the patois—because in midsummer herds of buffalo cows, elk and deer brought their young here from the burning heat of the prairies. Giant sycamores and willows fringed the water's edge, and farther back the velvet meadows were shaded by groves of walnuts and isolated oaks. At the portage there was still a mossy landing for canoes, and cabins falling in tangles of once cultivated gardens. Around the post of a friendly trader a settlement might spring up again, such as had risen around John Harris on the Susquehanna. And there, with his face turned toward Lake

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Michigan, and selling his furs in Mackinac, John Kinzie could mend his broken life and make a new beginning.

Leaving Louis Pirie and the negro to put two of the cabins in such repair that they would serve as a store and bunk-house for the winter, and arranging with Father Bertrand at the mission to engage *coureurs de bois* of the region for him, he returned to Detroit to buy goods and ponies. He made the journey alone, walking at a gait which carried him forty miles a day, even over the mired and gullied old Sauk trail.

It was late on a September afternoon when he broke through the woods to Prairie Ronde, the circular bay of grass which spread northwestward of the town. The tall growth swept his shoulders as he followed the narrow path. Midway he passed and spoke to one of his step-father's Pawnee Indian slaves. The foolish-looking fellow grinned amiably and volunteered the information that he had been sent for the cows. They had strayed from the Common.

"Well, they've started home. Can't you see their horns above the grass?"

He soon came out to the road which ran between scattered houses to the west wall of the

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big white fort. A quarter of a mile before him he saw two little boys running. By the time he had come around to the main gateway and saluted the cross of St. George and the scarlet-coated sentry on the rampart, the boys had gained the footbridge which spanned the little River Savoyard that ran between the fort and the palisaded town.

Young Mrs. McKillip had run from her picket-fenced garden to the east and overtaken them. In answer to her questioning they took their grimy little fists from their eyes and pointed to the prairie. To John Kinzie, in the rough garb he had worn in the woods all summer, this garrison lady in her low-cut evening gown of delicate silk and lace, and with her hair dressed high with a jeweled comb, was a being from another world. All his old dreams of her seemed fantastic. Even her pale distress was not for him.

"Mr. Kinzie, when the Dame School was dismissed, Geordie and these two little boys went to the Common to play. From there they followed the Pawnee who was sent from the tavern for the cows. He said he would get down from the horse and give them all a ride. He kept

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them running after him by first promising, and then refusing and laughing at them—”

“Yes, I met him on the prairie. I think he’s half-witted.”

“Oh, then, it’s all right.” She laughed in her sudden relief. “These little fellows were frightened, and turned back when the Indian said he could take only Geordie home.”

“But Geordie wasn’t with him! My God! Is my little brother out there alone on that prairie?”

They both turned as white as paper, and the boys sobbed aloud. The sun was setting behind the woods. The wind had risen and the high brown grass, splashed with the purple and gold ray flowers of autumn, rolled in billows like any sea.

“Here”—John Kinzie scribbled a note on a leaf of his pocket account-book, and gave it to the older boy—“take this to Mr. Forsyth. He’ll tell my mother that I’m in town and looking after Geordie, so she won’t be alarmed. I’ll get help at the fort.”

In five minutes Major McKillip led a company of soldiers out, and he and John Kinzie swung them in a line around the southern edge

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of the prairie. Only their heads and threshing arms showed as they moved forward through the grass, and soon these became indistinct in the fading light. Another crowd of men, following Mr. Forsyth, broke through the north gate of the town and filled the gaps in the line of soldiers. The dark came suddenly, spreading like a pall from the circular shadow of the forest. Because of the wind, and the danger of firing the grass, it was not possible to use torches.

As soon as she had seen her mother asleep in an upper room at the back of the house, young Mrs. McKillip put on moccasins, a short home-spun gown and a hooded cloak, and ran down to the gate of her picket-fenced garden. It was then eight o'clock. She could see nothing, but she could hear faint shouts of orders and the regular calling of Geordie's name. But as she watched, torches were lighted and the long line of men swept into the woods.

One who bore a flaring pine-knot turned back, raced across the swamp and the Common, and eastward around the fort. John Kinzie knew she would be there. He wore the face of death as he thrust Geordie's little Highland cap into her hand.

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"It was found on the edge of the woods.
Eleanor, come to my mother. I must rouse
the town."

He put his arm around her, for in their hurry
in the dark her feet stumbled over the rough
ground. Sticking his torch in the rustic railing
of the bridge, he flung the sleepy watchman at
the north gate aside. The town of squat,
thatch-hooded houses huddled within its high
stockade had not been alarmed.

"What is it, John?" She asked the question
with breathless apprehension as they ran down
Honoré Street to Ste. Anne.

"Wolf!" At that word of shuddering horror
she all but crumpled against his breast. But
she straightened under the lash of his need and
slipped her hand into his with a firm clasp.

"You cannot be sure."

"Yes, we had dogs. They got the scent and
laid down, whimpering. The men went into
the woods to look for the den."

At the tavern door he disappeared. Mrs.
Forsyth was in the public room, directing the
work of her Indian maids about a hearthful of
mush-pots, jars of buckwheat-cake batter and
bowls of bread set to rise, when the major's

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young leddy was blown in like a wraith from the windy dark.

“Ye bonny dawtie, ye shouldna come by your lane through the murky nicht. Is it something by the ordinar?”

“I had—had company to the door. It’s about Geordie. He’s out—”

“Aye, I ken.” The mother laughed happily. “Johnny’s hame, an’ has the bairn oot. But it’s unco late.”

“He’s looking for Geordie. Mr. Forsyth, too, is searching with men from the town, and Major McKillip with a hundred soldiers from the fort—since sunset. Dear Other Mother, this was found, and the darling child cannot be far away.” Mrs. Forsyth clutched the Highland cap and stared from that to her comforter, who drew her into loving arms on the settle. Above the cheerful crackling of the fire on the hearth, the voice of the town crier was heard in the street.

“Geordie Forsyth lost on Prairie Ronde!” The tinkling bell in the cupola of Ste. Anne’s began to ring. Doors and shutters flared open to firelight and candle flame, and there was a rushing, clattering sound of running feet.

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When, in the silence that followed, an Indian girl overturned a pot of mush, Mrs. Forsyth cried out sharply:

"Ye gude-for-naething!" Then she fell into the piteous weeping of a frightened child. "I dinna ken what's come ower me to speak to the puir lass so." She sat twisting the gay little velvet and tartan bonnet in her hands until the jaunty feather was broken. "What's a' thae blattering aboot? Who's lost? Aye, I ken. It's Johnny! He's rin awa' to sea, or to be a drummer laddie i' the rebel army!"

She was back in that other time of shock and grief long before Geordie was born. John Kinzie knew it when he pushed his way through a crowd of white-faced neighbors around the door. And there was her "heidstrong laddie", grown up and come home again, sorry and ashamed, kneeling at her feet to be forgiven, and crying out that he would never leave her "by her lane" again.

The smart shop which he opened in Honore Street that winter, with its show-window, its gilded sign, its whale-oil lamps, and Black Jim in livery at the door, was the pride of his mother's heart. She often sat in the workroom at

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the back to watch him fashion some delicate ornament, and in the evenings he made her happy by playing old Scotch airs on his violin. Sometimes she called him Geordie, to her own confusion and distress, and feared that she was getting "aff her heid."

In the spring, when the snow went off, a curling lock of dark-red hair was found, tangled among the roots of a thorn-bush, far up in the woods. And more than two years later an Ottawa Indian, coming down from Saginaw, discovered, in a brush-grown hollow near the trail, something which he brought to the Princess Nelly to take to the Silverman. She went into the shop at the noon dinner hour, when there were no customers, with Geordie's Hessian boots—warped by the weather, marked by cruel teeth, and green with mold. She stood leaning against the small show-case in which he displayed watches, chains and wedding-rings, tears dropping on her beaver muff until he had put the boots in a polished oaken box with the Highland cap and the lock of hair. Those sacred relics were to be buried with his mother.

"How is she now?"

"Failing fast. It is very dear of you to be

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with her so often"—never, he reflected, in his hours at home.

"I love her, John, next to my own mother." He read her tender thought of him that he would soon be alone, and reassured her.

"I shall have a task." He stood sturdily, as he had on that unforgettable day on the island in the Genesee, his legs apart, his auburn head held high, his hands in his pockets—clenched there to keep his grip on himself—and talked to her about the trading-post he meant to build on the St. Joseph.

"It will be a career to civilize that cross-roads of travel on an outpost of the wilderness and, some years later, move on. It isna soldiers, but builders like John Harris, who will conquer these frontiers."

Better than she had ever understood before she knew that he was a man for the high adventure. Duty could hold him as it held her, but he would have strained at any leash of love. His soul was outward bound, and his mate would have to follow him or be left behind. It was not rash impulse, but the secret heart of him, that had spoken when he said: "Go into the wilderness with me. We'll do brave things

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together and never feel the earth beneath our feet."

And knowing the price her mother had paid, and his, and Geordie, she would have gone, "a hundred wild leagues" to be with him.

X

THE TASK OF THE VANGUARD

ONCE or twice in every season after he had his trading-post on the St. Joseph well established, John Kinzie left his clerk, Jean Baptist Chandonnai, in charge of the store, and took to the trail with Louis Pirie to extend his connections. One winter he went far down the Kankakee River into the Illinois country, to see the Pottawatomie chief, Black Partridge. He was disappointed to find the village deserted, the tribe away on the hunt, scattered over the bleak prairie up to the Chicago River.

The streams had begun to freeze when he started home, so he left his canoe at the rapids with a band of friendly Indians, and buying a pack pony cut across the frozen swamps south of the sand-dunes of Lake Michigan. A sudden thaw put him and his faithful voyageur in the extremity of peril. In crossing a creek the pony

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went through rotten ice, carrying down their camping outfit. By throwing away their guns they managed to reach the bank, but they nearly perished before they could build a fire and dry their clothing. Then a blizzard swept in over the prairie, obliging them to lie in a belt of woods until they had consumed what food was in their pouches. With another hundred miles to go, there was no guide of sun or stars in the overcast sky. All trails were obliterated, and the snow still falling in windy gusts; and to exhausted and starving men the landmarks of trees and hillocks took on strange aspects.

After three days of wandering Louis fell into a drifted hollow, unable to rise again. It was then that John Kinzie caught a glimpse of a torn banner of smoke. It vanished instantly behind wind-driven veils of fine, dry snow, but he had marked its direction in line with a blasted oak, a twisted witch of a thorn-bush, and a clump of dwarfed poplars. Staggering past these and up a hummocky rise, he fell twice before he plunged headlong through an elk-skin door curtain into a squalid bark hut.

Stooping over a smoky fire of swamp trash, a squaw was stirring something in an earthen pot.

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She turned upon him with the snarl of an animal when he asked for food, and pointed to her husband, who sat huddled on a heap of pelts in the apathy of helplessness and despair. He had broken his arm, and she was cooking the last of the corn. Their ten-year-old son had gone out to hunt. He might bring in a rabbit, but was much more likely to be lost in the storm. She laughed wildly, like some crazed creature, at this starving stranger who asked for food.

But, as he toppled over on the floor, she pulled him up and held a small wooden bowl of the thin corn soup to his lips. "Drink! Drink!" she cried. Too stupid with cold and hunger to realize her heroic sacrifice, he drank, and begged for more.

"No, it would hurt you now. Bime-by."

"Not for me!" He tried to tell her for whom he wanted it, but forgot. The hot soup and the smoky warmth of the hut made him drowsy. He was aroused by the cries of joy which greeted the return of the boy with a scrawny turkey. The squaw tore off the feathers, ripped the bird open, and plunged it into the pot. Then, dividing the corn soup, she hastened to the guest with another bowl, and began to unlace his snow-

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shoes. At that he remembered. He had left Louis in the snow. Struggling to his feet, he reeled out of the hut.

It was the squaw who found the way back over his own blurred tracks to where he had taken off his hooded blanket-coat to cover the fallen man. With the disabled Indian and the boy pushing behind, they got Louis up to the cabin. Vigorous rubbing with snow took the frost from his face and hands, but the thongs of his snow-shoes, getting wet and shrinking, had lacerated his feet and stopped the circulation. The skin of his toes had burst, and his neips—those squares of thick, blanket cloth in which woodsmen wrapped their feet before putting on their moccasins—came away stiff with frozen blood. John Kinzie never forgot how, through the agony of having his feet thawed and then wrapped in poultices of healing herbs, the brave fellow laughed and joked, declaring that he had “plaintee good healt’ left, by gosh!”

There was another lease of life for five people in that lean, tough turkey, and courage in the name of Shaw-nee-aw-kee, the Silverman. Every Indian in the region had heard of this friendly, in trepid and resourceful trader. The

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first thing he did was to fell a tree for a roaring fire, so they could all sleep in comfort and without fear. He dug a *cache* and hid the Indian's store of beaver, otter and mink skins where they could be recovered in the spring. He shot a buck, and while the squaw was cutting up and cooking the meat for the journey he made a drag-litter of poles, snow-shoes and the elk-skin door curtain. Trussed in a buffalo robe, Louis was lashed to this, and even the injured brave could slip into the rawhide harness and take his turn at playing pony.

They were five days in crossing the treeless waste of Door Prairie and the drift-filled lowland of the Parkovash. The early winter dusk had fallen when they reached the St. Joseph. In answer to their shouts, Chandonnai and Black Jim rushed out of the log store which stood on the high east bank of the river, and the squaws and half-breed children of the *coureurs de bois* employed at the post tumbled from their cabins. The travelers were soon helped across the frozen river and up the steep bank, and the Indians, housed until spring in the guest-lodge, were feasting on fat bear meat and corn.

In the morning John Kinzie had bad news to

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break to Louis. Since there had been no woman or child in his life he had found solace in the friendship of men, and a certain exaltation of the spirit in contemplating the consecration of Father Bertrand, and the dog-like devotion to himself of the French Canadian who had followed him to this wild country ten years before. Louis was *mon brave* at ordinary times, but now something nearer:

"*Mon frère*, the squaws think your feet will have to be cut off."

Poor Louis's jaw dropped. "Dat's damn fine smart trick *le bon Dieu* play on a feller, M'sieu John."

There were compensations. "You will get to sit behind my counter like a laird while Chandonnai goes into the woods."

Louis chuckled. The idea of Chandonnai as a voyageur intrigued his imagination, for the man was pure Norman French, of good birth and education. His origin was obscure and he discouraged curiosity. With a manner nonchalant and debonair, and wearing his buckskins like any dandy of Montreal on a holiday in the woods, he had paddled up the river five years before. He had discharged himself from the employ of

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Mr. Burnett, being unable to tolerate the habits of the trader's dirty squaw to whom he always referred with polite irony as *la belle sauvage*. He had gifts of conversation, skill at cards, and a grand-opera voice which recommended him to men marooned in the forest; and, indeed, he soon proved himself to be an honest and capable man. Handsome as a fairy-tale prince, with blue eyes and curling chestnut hair, and incorrigibly romantic and dramatic, John Kinzie discovered in him those talents for forest dialects and diplomacy of which the United States Government made use in later years.

"Jean Baptist pretty feller! He go tromp, tromp een col' and wet lak two-legged pony, wile I marry weeth wan nice French mamzelle an' leev fine," was Louis' delighted comment.

"You can just bet my last dollar you will. I'll find the lucky girl for you in Mackinac."

But this was mere persiflage to Louis, who returned to the previous question: "W'at you do weeth heem, M'sieu John?"

"Your feet? I wouldna be surprised if we would have to bury them, *mon brave*."

Then Louis exploded. "W'en I get bury, it's all een wan beeg piece, by gosh!"

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Nothing could move him from that resolution, so Chandonnai went down to the mission for Father Bertrand. Louis confessed his sins and took the last sacrament philosophically, and then claimed all the privileges and attentions of a man doomed to death. He would eat no more corn. From the scant supply of flour which had to be brought from Detroit *via* Mackinac, Black Jim served him with flapjacks, spread with wild honey, three times a day. There were card-playing and violin music at all hours, and Chandonnai went through his repertoire of the chansons of Paris and the French West Indies. Then the joke was "on the other fellers," for under the care of the skilful squaws Louis' feet began to heal. With the opening of the spring rush of business he was taken to the mission, where every waif and stray and lame dog of the woods went to be mended.

With Chandonnai and Black Jim at the mouth of the river to arrange with Mr. Burnett for the necessary boats from Mackinac to take the furs up in May, John Kinzie was alone in his store for a week. Indians had begun to come in with their pelts, and he was obliged to work at his bench many hours every day to keep a

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good supply of silver trinkets in stock. At ten o'clock one blustering night late in March, he was hammering a bracelet around a prong of his small anvil so lustily that he failed to hear a timid knocking at his door.

A pretty, half-breed girl, so very French in appearance that her eyes were hazel-gray, and her face a delicate, colorless oval framed in rippling brown hair, slipped noiselessly into the room. The sudden gust of wind which entered with her made John Kinzie turn. Too thinly clad in a shapeless calico sack and tattered strouds petticoat for that bleak night, she shook with the cold as she gazed at him in frightened appeal.

"Come to the fire my child!" he said. She fled to the hearth and tucked her feet under her like a kitten. For some reason that was obscure to him yet, her presence there irritated him, but he spoke kindly, "Why didna you go to one of the cabins where there are squaws?"

"All dark, M'sieu. Every wan de peop' have retire." She spread her hands eloquently, and looking up at him through long lashes, indescribably deprecating and demure, gave him a half-scared and fleeting smile, and looked around in pleased wonder.

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The trading-post was quite twenty-five by forty feet in size, and built after the good French manner of squared timbers set upright in trenches, and chinked weather tight with clay and ashes cement. There was wealth untold to her in the tall fur-press, the iron-banded and padlocked silver-chest, and in the goods heaped on puncheon counters and shelves and hung from racks. Through open doors to small, built-on additions, she could see the glow of the cooking-fire in the kitchen, curtained bunks in closet bedrooms, and such an abundance of rude comfort as she had never dreamed of.

"I t'ink I lak it fine here, m'sieu," she said, with a gentle sigh of contentment. Anxious to prove that she could be useful she began to brush the clay hearth with a turkey wing.

"Drop that," he ordered, with such quiet emphasis that she broke into racking sobs that shook her slender figure. "Stop crying. Now tell me who you are, and who had the impudence to leave you here."

Her name was 'Toinette, and she was the daughter of a vagabond French trapper and a Pottawottomie squaw. She was so small and weak, "lak wan leetle birch-tree." She could

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not march or carry a pack. No woodsman would burden himself with such a useless wife. So her parents had left her at the trader's door.

"I suffer, M'sieu, long tam. I be your *bonne femme* an' keep your house so ver' nice." Like any little homeless dog, she crept to his feet.

It made him suffer to see her there. "Get up. Your father ought to be shot. Eat all you can and get dry and warm. We have a journey to make. Find one of my fur coats to wear. Some day you'll have a good husband, my dear, who wouldna think of letting such a tender wee thing carry a pack."

He went out quickly and shut her in. He had a profound compassion for those unfortunates whom white men in the wilderness took and abandoned so irresponsibly. And the very thought of any other woman in that intimate relation revolted him—swept him out on a tide of memories of Eleanor Lytle.

He had not seen his lost love, nor heard her name, in a decade. He did not even know where she was. The flag of the United States had been raised at Detroit four years before, and the British garrison had marched out to Fort Malden, at the mouth of the river, on the Cana-

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dian shore of Lake Erie. But some of the officers went on to Montreal, and a few were recalled to England. He had no reason to hope that he would ever see his bonny leddy again in this world, but he "couldna do anything else but love her forever."

No one had seen 'Toinette enter his house, and no one saw her leave. It was long after midnight when John Kinzie led her up to the ruined fort and into the dark mission. Father Bertrand came out, shading a candle flame with a transparent hand. There was a shelter-house for squaws and papooses, but this *demoiselle* must appear to arrive at a more respectable hour in the morning. So a mattress was spread for her on the floor of the chapel, and she slept there under the pitying eyes of the Mother of God.

When he took his furs down to the harbor in May, John Kinzie saw the little maid in the mission garden, sitting under a blossoming cherry-tree at the feet of Louis Pirie, and making for that proud *garçon* the first pair of moccasins for which he had had any use since Little Christmas. Now he intended to dance at his own wedding.

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"W'at I tell you, M'sieu John! I get marry weeth dat nice French Mamzelle 'Toinette."

"Why, God bless you, *mon brave*; you have all the luck!" He claimed the right of Louis's *bourgeois* to kiss the cheek of the blushing fiancée, and told her to go up to the store and take what she needed for her trousseau.

"And this sommer I build 'Toinette wan leetle cabin lak bird nest," said Louis.

"What's that? No, you willna need to build a cabin. You travel the trails no more, my friend. You are to live in the store building and manage this post for me. Chandonnai and I will get out. I expect to build another post."

He left them there, Louis voluble, the *demoiselle* speechless with bliss over this happy dénouement to threatened tragedies. And John Kinzie, his heart warmed to a world that was not all unkind, was released to a long-held purpose and eager to be off on what might be a perilous enterprise.

With his pelts made up in compact bundles and stowed away in his small log warehouse at the harbor, he had to wait a week for the Mackinac boats. So, with Black Jim to cook the fish and ducks they brought in, he and Chan-

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donnaï camped on the beach. It was after supper one night that he spoke to his clerk of his intentions. He was lying on the sand, looking away to where, from the setting sun, a glittering path of light stretched across the tumbling waters of Lake Michigan—a trail of glory that had long beckoned to his adventurous spirit.

“Chandonnai, the Saint Joseph, this whole east shore of Lake Michigan is a back door on the world. But at the mouth of the Chicago River is a front door, with two-thirds of the continent behind it. The French traders have over there an arena big enough for their opportunity.”

“But the prairie Indians refuse to trade with Americans, Monsieur.” John Kinzie had foresworn allegiance to the British crown when the Stars and Stripes were raised above the fort at Mackinac, and thereby made his position in that country still more difficult. The Indians had been defeated by the Americans in the Revolution, pushed back in Ohio by General Wayne’s crushing victory, and forced to cede tracts of land as far west as the Chicago River to the United States. Now, by means of the lavish distribution of gifts through Fort Malden, all

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Western tribes were being won over to the cause of England.

"I know all that, but I'm going. There is talk of a fort and an Indian agency at the mouth of the Chicago River, but I willna wait for that. I'll be the first American to build a post and to trade on that shore. One day there'll be a town bigger than Detroit."

Chandonnai was amused. "With Madame Duck and Monsieur Frog for habitants. It's a vast marsh, flooded half the year and frozen the other half."

"All right—all right!" John Kinzie stopped argument by agreeing cheerfully. "I'll grow webbed feet and a furred hide if needful, but I'm going." In the excess of his energy and enthusiasm he strode the beach as he talked. At thirty-six he still had his boyish zest for the adventurous life, and to this he had added the experience and the assured vision of maturity. It was his task to push this frontier back.

"If you are the man I think you are, Jean Baptist, you are going with me. You are a Frenchman, therefore a little brother to the wilderness. Every Indian is your *frère sauvage*. You canna deny it. We'll spend the next year

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over there making a friend or two. I tried again to see Chief Black Partridge on the Kankakee last winter, but that wily bird slipped away through the tall grass."

"Ah-ha! Monsieur, I will arrange that audience for this evening." Chandonnai sprang to his feet dramatically. "There's a soirée up this *boulevard du lac*, with all the royalties attending. We will entertain that company with a serenade. *Voilà!* It is there!" A faint glow, the reflection from a hidden camp-fire upon the dark sky of early evening, hung in the zenith above the bluff, two miles to the north. In pointing it out Chandonnai had the air of raising a curtain on one of his own productions.

Among other curious items of information which might be of use to him in that country, Father Bertrand had told John Kinzie of a custom that had come down from the earliest days of French trade in the region. In the spring of the year, when the prairie Pottawatomies had sold their furs on the Chicago and Illinois rivers, they yearned to see their kindred of the Michigan forests. So, led by their chiefs, they paddled around the head of the lake to some secret retreat on the shore. A smoke

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signal was passed from village to village, and every tribe over a radius of a hundred miles was represented at a grand feast and pow-wow. Now and then a popular French voyageur was admitted to these gatherings, which had been held annually for a score of years under the unsuspecting nose of Mr. Burnett.

Every spring thereafter, when John Kinzie took his furs down to the harbor, he had kept a sharp lookout, in the dawn and the twilight, for arriving canoes, and had investigated the source of every puff of smoke that went up from the shore. It was Chandonnai who had now had the luck to see the smoke signal given from the highest point of the bluff two days before. Saying nothing, he had scouted in the rear. As the river was the highway of travel, he had gone up-stream, above Mr. Burnett's fortress post, and anchored his canoe in the wild rice. From that hiding-place he had seen Chief Topenebe and Chief Pokagon glide down with a band of braves after nightfall, as shadowy as ghosts, and turn into a creek. He had followed them, found where they had disembarked, and the path which led to a forest-girt hollow behind the bluff.

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"Good work, *mon brave!* Topenebe and Pokagon are friends and neighbors, so let's smoke 'em all out."

Like two school-boys on a frolic they jumped into a canoe, pushed across the surf and paddled upshore. The moon had risen above the wooded bluff, its light absorbing the reflection from the camp fire and silvering the lake, when they beached their boat. Strolling along the strip of wet sand, John Kinzie played his violin, and Chandonnai's fine tenor voice echoed from the sandy cliff and rolled out over the waters. It was not the primitive refrain of any boat crew, but one of those minor melodies in which the negro slave of the French West Indies told his love and grief and the despair of bondage. Never had such music been heard on that wild shore, and the Indians were unable to resist it.

Sentinels posted on the crest of the bluff slipped down for a nearer view of them, and when the song was ended scores of braves swarmed over and raced across the sand. There were shouts to reassure the visitors from the prairies. It was Shaw-nee-aw-kee, the Silver-man, and his French clerk—friends to be

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trusted. With much laughter and rough play they were rushed up the wall of sliding sand and down into a natural amphitheater that was lighted by a camp-fire and rimmed with enormous beeches and maples. Food and pipes were passed, and the white guests were given seats of honor. Half the night was spent in the pleasures of feasting, music and story-telling.

For an hour Chief Black Partridge kept his piercing look fixed on John Kinzie. He had had a description of this auburn-haired, gray-eyed Scotch trader, and when opportunity offered asked if he was not the man who had been known as the Silverman to the Ottawas and Wyandots of Detroit.

"Aye, but that was ten years back. They would not be remembering me."

Black Partridge nodded. They remembered him for his friendliness, his fair dealing, and for his beautiful ornaments of fine silver. And they would never forget that day in the council-house when he had acted as interpreter for Princess Nelly of the Senecas.

For the first time in a decade he heard her name, spoken in this wild camp, and by an

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Indian who had never seen her! Her story had become a legend, spreading through related tribes to the prairies of Illinois. It gave him the strange, comforting feeling that she had always been there, not only as a cherished memory in his heart, but as a companion walking beside him. Her name and fame had gone on winds of wonder over every trail he had traveled, and run before him to his new goal.

XI

JOURNEY'S END

ON Mackinac John Kinzie found a letter from his stepfather, asking him to come to Detroit to clear the titles to family lands. The United States Government was going over old French and British records and confiscating all property of doubtful ownership.

Had only his own interests been involved, he would have refused to go. It had been arranged that he and Chandonnai were to join Black Partridge's band on the Kankakee in October, for the fall hunting of deer and buffalo. He had sent his clerk back to the post on the St. Joseph, and there was a summer of hard work before them both. The store had to be stocked for Louis, a double quantity of silver trinkets made, and he and Chandonnai outfitted for a winter on the Western prairies.

Once in Detroit, he could transact that

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business for Mr. Forsyth in a few hours, but it would take him two weeks or more to go down in one of the long, open boats of Cadillac's day. Since the British evacuation of the upper lakes no sailing-vessels went above Fort Malden at the mouth of the Detroit River. He and Black Jim took passage in the same sort of primitive craft in which they had made the voyage up to Mackinac.

Built of white birch bark on a framework of cedar, sewed with the roots of spruce and calked with boiled pitch, it was thirty-five feet long, with a high prow curved over like the head of a violin. Seats for eight rowers were suspended from the gunwale, and a crossbar amidships was pierced for a mast. Good time was made in fair weather, for the wild crew of French Canadians easily rowed four miles an hour from dawn to sunset, and in every favoring wind a gay blanket-sail was unfurled. Then the boat went scudding over the white-caps, shipping water at every dip. The middle was decked to protect a ton or so of freight, but an able-bodied passenger was expected to take his turn at the steering-oar and baling-bucket.

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Every night, and during periods of stormy weather, the boat was run into a creek mouth or sheltered cove. A camp-fire was built in the damp and gloomy pine and hardwood forests of the Huron shore, to keep away miasmic vapors, mosquitoes and wildcats. Passengers and crew ate hulled corn and bear's grease in company, and played cards and violins until midnight. Then, rolling up in sodden blankets, they indulged in much cheerful and picturesque profanity at the wolves that gathered on the nearest rise to howl at them all night.

A fleet of such rude craft went out from Mackinac together, but the boats of the English company which still had a monopoly of the fur trade turned eastward, going to Montreal over Georgian Bay and the Ottawa River. Furs from the north no longer went down through Detroit, and John Kinzie had long known that pelts from the region which lay back of Lake Erie now streamed through Fort Malden.

None the less was he shocked by the blight which had fallen on the old gateway of trade on the Strait. The population of the town had declined from three thousand to five hundred.

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Many farms fronting the river had been abandoned, and windmills were falling into ruins. There was no shipping in the harbor pool, and the King's Wharf sagged on its decaying piling. Through deserted streets lined with vacant houses and littered with slumbering pigs and reminiscent hens he strode, to find Mr. Forsyth an idle, discouraged landlord in a smaller tavern by Pontiac's gate.

"Losh, laddie, but ye're the first live mon I've seen sin' Detroit laid doon an' deed. 'Twas the second exodus—a waefu' sicht—and I'm fair thankfu' your mither wasna here to see it."

"Well, well, be thankful the British havena carried away the town or its location. It's the natural outlet to—no, we cannna expect the English to let American trade out through Montreal. New York State will have to cut a canal from Lake Erie to the Hudson River."

Mr. Forsyth threw up his hands at this crazy notion. "Ye're aff your heid! It's a hundred leagues."

"No I amna. Hold onto what you have here for your grandchildren. Detroit will wake up one o' these days."

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"Aye, it wull wauken when Gabriel blaws his trump. It wull tak anither war to stap the divilment that's gaen on at Fort Malden."

"No doubt of that," John Kinzie admitted, gravely. "The Indians as far west as the Illinois River are being supplied from there with weapons and articles of luxury for which they canna possibly pay." There had been a display of finery, and a hasty hiding of new and handsome guns, when he and Chandonnai joined that innocent-appearing social gathering on the Michigan shore.

If he had needed further proof that Western tribes were in the pay of England, he got it when he went up to the fort to go over family papers with the commander of the American garrison. Little Turtle, a Miami chief from Fort Wayne, had come up the river in a canoe, evidently from a profitable visit to Fort Malden. Roaring drunk, and terrorizing women and children, he was swaggering about in the discarded uniform of some officer of a Highland regiment. His tartan kilts flapped about his bare legs, his bonnet was set at a rakish angle, and the breast of his red coat was studded with two hundred silver buttons, medals and brooches.

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When he shouted derisively and made an insulting gesture at the Stars and Stripes floating above the main gateway, John Kinzie sent him sprawling into the rippling Savoyard, and kept his foot on the neck of the half-drowned and drunken beast until soldiers took him away to the guard-house.

But, indeed, the fort gave small comfort to a patriotic American. Detroit was headquarters for the United States Army of the Northwest, but it had a garrison of only three hundred ill-supplied and undisciplined men. The whitewash had scaled from the walls; guns of small caliber rusted on the bastions; an untidy sentinel slouched along the rampart, and the guard at the gate let him pass unchallenged. The inexperience, weakness and poverty of the new republic were here betrayed to the contempt of the savage. But social distinctions had disappeared. Quite as a matter of course the commanding officer asked this intelligent and enterprising trader, who was in the rough garb of the woods and waters, to join the officers' mess at supper.

John Kinzie thanked him, but declined. If he could buy a couple of pack-ponies, to carry

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his silver and a camping outfit, he and his Negro servant would be off, sleeping that night by the old Sauk trail. He had intended to inquire about the prospect of a fort on the Chicago River, but that now seemed of small importance. It was plain that no adequate force could be sent to that distant frontier. He would have to go at his own risk. Unattached and especially equipped men like himself must give themselves to the service of the country on every undefended border, if this experimental government of free men was to survive. He turned at the gate and saluted the flag with its sixteen stars, thrilled with the thought of helping to add other luminaries to that blue field.

It was only mid-afternoon of just such a long June day in the waning moon of strawberries as when he had gone to the rescue of a captive maiden on the Genesee. A lady in deep mourning, who had been calling on Captain Whistler's wife, and who left the fort a dozen yards before him, gave him a keen sense of political changes and the flight of time. He took note of her short-waisted, scant-skirted gown, for when he left Detroit ten years before, Marie Antoinette and Lady Washington were

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setting the fashions. Now it was Madame Bonaparte and Dolly Madison.

The lady, who was leading a fairy-like little girl of six or seven, stopped on the footbridge in the shade of a sycamore-tree to let the child look down at minnows darting about in a sunny pool. Her back was toward him as she leaned on the rustic railing, and he would have passed her, but, hearing such a quick, firm tread on the planks as was seldom heard in Detroit in those days, she turned. With a gasping cry her hands went out to him.

"Oh, John! Is it you?"

He gathered her hands—he would have gathered herself to his breast—in that first impulsive movement, but soldiers were looking on, the puzzled child was staring from one to the other, and some wayfarer was coming through the dilapidated gate to the town.

"This—this is my little daughter Margaret, John. Peggy darling, shake hands with mother's dearest friend." He took the child's shyly offered hand mechanically, having eyes only for the sweet agitation and the sable garb of his bonny leddy.

"You are at Fort Malden, then? I thought



WITH A GASPING CRY HER HANDS WENT OUT TO HIM

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you might have gone to Montreal, or to England. I didna think ever to look upon your face again."

"No, John, I'm— Major McKillip was killed at Fallen Timbers on the Maumee."

He was bewildered. "Were British soldiers in that battle where General Wayne crushed the Ohio Indians?"

"No, not in the battle. But a small fort was built then to supply England's red allies and to protect their retreat. While Danny was out with Indian scouts the password was changed. In trying to re-enter the fort in haste, after nightfall, he was shot by mistake by one of his own sentinels."

John Kinzie's knitted and tasseled cap of a voyageur came off in tribute. It was in such ironic ways that this wilderness took its toll of brave men.

"But that was five years ago!" She had a child. Had she learned to love the father so much that she could mourn so long? She divined the question he would have asked. In those lonely years he might have formed some consoling tie which must separate them forever, but with a courage too proud to wish to

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hide her heart she said, gently: "This is for my dear mother, John. She went to heaven only six months ago."

She was free! And in that wild country, where only the lucky man died in his bed, happiness had to be seized between perils.

"When can I see you, Eleanor? Where? Beloved, you canna deny me one hour."

He had lost none of his boyish ardor. Indeed, his long-pent-up passion burst its bounds and engulfed them both. In that public place she met his immemorial look with one of blushing confusion.

"I'm living—at Grosse Pointe—on one of the old French farms—in just the home in which you would have left me. Do—do you remember? A pine-knot torch will light you to my private pier, to-night. No, John—no, dear!" she protested, "I can't have you walking through the town with me, with a face like that." Her old laugh, a little tremulous and with a threat of tears, bubbled up. "You—we've scandalized Peggy already. Come, darling."

He had seen that look of maternal tenderness on her face before, for children not her

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own—for Geordie; and a cherished thought of her had been that she would be the most beautiful mother in the world. He suddenly loved the little girl who had her gentian-blue eyes, and curling locks as pale and lustrous as corn silks. When they had disappeared through the north gate to the town he had to look about to get his bearings.

A Pawnee Indian slave woman waited in a canoe by the beach for her mistress. Peggy was an energetic child of quick, dancing movements, as her mother had been, but when she had hopped into the boat she settled herself on a cushion in the bottom and sat as still as any papoose. Mrs. McKillip removed her high-heeled slippers and her heavy black turban and veil, and put on a wide straw hat and moccasins. Pushing up her sleeves, she took one of the paddles. It was eight miles up-stream to her farm, but at the end of the long pull she swung Peggy up to the pier. Sending the squaw to the house with packages, she climbed out, and with a vigorous movement shoved the boat underneath, where it would not be warped by the sun. The little girl leaned over to watch her.

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"You do look so sweet, mother, all pink and happy."

"And you look so sweet and foolish, darling, standing where you are liable to tumble into the river." She smiled, half humorously, but kept a quiet eye fixed on the child. "The water is deep here, and you cannot swim as well as you should. Be a little afraid, my dear."

Peggy stepped back and walked carefully along the middle of the narrow pier. They scrambled up the grassy bank, raced across the dusty road, and went through a gate in a continuous picket fence which "for miles" fenced the fronts of the deep and narrow farms from the highway. The path to a rustic, thatch-roofed piazza was bordered with flowering annuals, and roses and wild honeysuckles clambered up the pillars to jutting dormer windows. It was at a supper of bread and milk and strawberries, under a cherry-tree red with fruit and tuneful with robins, that Peggy remarked that there was a picket off the fence and she could easily squeeze through and run away.

"Yes, dear, and you could just as easily

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stay inside. Mother pulled that picket off so you could learn to stay in a big, wild garden with no fence at all. It's like that in the woods where—where we may go to live very soon. Then you will have to make fences in your mind."

Peggy clapped her hands. "That would be fun. I could build a pretend fence anywhere—from tree to tree, or where the grass began to grow tall, or—"

"Or around the circle of light made by a camp-fire. That's a magic ring of gay little dancing fairies." In the odorous dusk of the garden the child nestled in her mother's arms to listen to the primitive myths of fire and wind and water, of bird and blossom, with which Cornplanter had peopled the wilds with enchantment for the Princess Nelly. She was still building imaginary fences around herself, in a wilderness populous with invisible playmates, when she fell asleep.

In the big, loft-chamber, with its sloping ceilings and projecting dormers, that was divided by curtains into several sleeping apartments, John Kinzie's bonny leddy let down her long blonde hair. It was darker now, but it

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still gleamed golden in sun or candle-light. Braiding it into two plaits, she wound them about her head in the quaint fashion that had been approved for her by Madame Guy. Then, opening a chest in which she had locked away the romance of her girlhood, she took out and put on a straight, sleeveless robe of yellow deerskin and a wampun belt. She would be married soon, sedately as became a young widow with a child, crossing the river to her brother's house in Sandwich, Canada, for the ceremony. But to-night she meant to be the maid, ardent and full of tender gaiety, who had kept a tryst with love in a starlit ravine.

In her saddest days, when she feared that John Kinzie might never come back, or, coming, might not be free to woo her again, she had always been able to laugh when she dropped through the open hatchway of the loft and went down the ladder stairs backward, on all-fours, like Peggy's clever little dog. Now she chuckled with glee to think how John would look going up and down, and how it would exasperate him to bump his head on the low, many-angled ceiling and casement-windowed

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nooks above. He was not a big man, but he had the large, free movements of one who dwelt in space and who plunged ahead, seeing no obstacle smaller than a tree, a chasm or a flood in his path.

He would not fit into her cozy little house at all, but, oh, how he would love it! It was his dream of a safe nest for her, come true—the one he had described, punctuating each delectable item with a kiss. Built of hewn timbers set upright and with exposed beams, its green-painted Dutch door opening on the vine-wreathed piazza was divided horizontally, to admit light and to keep babies in and chickens out. Its huge, clay-plastered chimney had two fireplaces, one a yawning cavern in the living-room, and the other opening into the kitchen at the rear.

Oaken settles were built in, and bright blankets and Indian embroidered elk-skins curtained doors and windows and draped a couch bed. Grass mats and black bear-skins covered the rough floor, and antlers, guns, powder-horns and a violin-case decorated the walls. At the back there was a "bit shop," which she had fitted up in secret and kept

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locked, where a thrifty Scotch silversmith could work at his trade by day. And now, before the fireplace, which was filled with summer greenery, she arranged a supper-table, spreading it with coarse white linen of her own weaving, and setting it out with her pewter and blue Canton ware, her silver spoons and candlesticks, and a silver bowl of roses.

She meant to win him from the wilds if she could—to hold him to this sweet anchorage. They could be so happy here, if he could be content in this backwater of life. It would be just that, for Detroit was no longer the center of things. But if he could not, she was determined not to be left behind. She looked all about her. Except for tables, chairs, bedsteads and clothing-chests, which could be replaced by ruder contrivances, everything in the house could be tied up in bundles, loaded onto ponies or into canoes, and so carried to any home that an adventurous man might set up on the wildest frontier.

With her waiting there, her love confessed, she knew how he would come racing up the river. She was at the gate when she heard his voice in the first strains of "Malbrouck," and

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when the song rose to the joyous call of the voyageur to his sweetheart or wife:

*Petite fille jeune et gentille,
Courrez! Courrez! Courrez!*

she ran across the road, down the bank to the pier, flung the betraying torch into the water, and was in the arms of her own man who had come in from the woods.

In the long, golden summer which followed, the Silverman worked in his "bit shop," filling pony saddle-bags with trinkets for the Indian trade. The house was a place of laughter, sweet peace and comfort, with his bonny leddy busy with her woman at housewifely tasks; and every moonlighted evening was spent on the river with a violin. Time was forgot until, one night in the garden, he heard the shrill, insistent harbinger of frost—the call of the katydid.

"It's almost September," he said, in a startled way, as though awaking from a dream. "I must be off next week."

She lay inert in his arms for a moment, then turned and looked up into his face, brooding upon her, so pale and quiet at the thought of parting. "Yes, John. Have you enough pack-

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ponies? Tell me what I can take without burdening or delaying you, and I'll leave the rest."

"Take with you, my darling?"

"Yes—I'm going with you. Why, John, what did you think?"

"You couldna travel those wild ways." He told her of that mired and gullied old Sauk trail of two hundred miles to the St. Joseph, and of the primitive craft on the upper lakes. "And you couldna live out there on Indian fare. There isna a white woman west of Detroit."

"Yes, I could. I grew up in an Indian town. I can march and row and ride. I can load a pony or a canoe, set up a tepee of hemlock boughs, build a camp-fire, catch fish and shoot small game. I can speak the patois of the voyageurs, and the Iroquois, Ottawa, Wyandot and Miami dialects. I'd soon pick up Pottawottomie. And I hae a bit o' Scotch for my auld jo. Hoo is my gude mon to do wi'oot me?"

"God knows!" He went as white as paper at that thought. "But you couldna take Peggy. Think of your mother and mine—think of Geordie—the price women and chil-

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dren must pay for living with their men on wild frontiers."

They shuddered in each other's arms at the memory of all those horrors, but she was none the less sure of herself. "That terrible thing never would have happened to Geordie if he had been my bairn. And if I had been a little afraid, Corplanter could never have stolen me. I've trained Peggy as would any squaw. She'd be as safe and happy as a papoose."

"Dinna think of it! There will be another war. All the Western Indians are being armed at Fort Malden against Americans."

"Yes, I thought so. But would we be safer here? This fort could not stand an attack in force nor any long siege."

"British troops would be here to restrain their red allies."

"But there are perils everywhere, of fire and flood, famine, pestilence and warfare so savage that it could break through any wall of human caution or contrivance." She was down on her knees in the dew-wet grass, clasping his rigid arm, and pleading as though for her life. "We can't be separated again. I can brave any life, suffer any death, so it be with you."

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What a woman to be given to him! He bowed his head to her shoulder, and his heart ran to water at the thought of leaving her. Thinking she had won, she put her arms around his neck and pulled herself up to his knee.

"Your wild post on the Saint Joseph! When we build a home there and clear fields for corn and wheat, and plant an orchard and garden, and fence in a pasture, it will be a settlement. I want to see brave Louis and his nice French Mamzelle 'Toinette, and your saintly missionary, and romantic Chandonnai, and the poor Indians who shared their last corn soup with you. How dear and human is that little world you have made. And I'll make friends too. I'll take that Princess Nelly costume and entertain all the royalties of the forest and prairie."

Then the blow fell. "Dearly beloved, I have no home for you. I've burned my bridges, put Louis in charge of the post on the St. Joseph. Chandonnai and I are going across Lake Michigan to the prairies of the Illinois country." It was as though a man should speak to-day of going across Bering Sea to the

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tundras of Siberia. She went limp in his arms, and was silent so long that he asked, in a strained voice:

"Do you want me to stay here, Eleanor?"

"No, my darling. You would be unhappy; then you wouldn't love me any more." When she could speak with perfect control she went on: "I knew, that day on the island, that I should have to follow you, or be left behind. You belong out there, on the edge of things, with your shoulder against the horizon. Some day—when you have your post established, I intend to go. But now, John, you'll be home every summer?"

"I canna tell." Torn between his love and the call to his heroic task, he wore such a look of pale distress that she importuned him no more.

In a week he was gone. Standing on a gun-platform on a bastion of the fort, she watched him until he had crossed Prairie Ronde and disappeared in the woods. He had left Black Jim with her to manage the farm. Feeling very small and helpless and desolate, she sat idle in the canoe and let the devoted Negro row her home.

XII

AT THE GATEWAY OF THE WEST

AS soon as he reached the fort on the St. Joseph, John Kinzie took Chandonnai down the river and paddled around the head of Lake Michigan. On a low shore of sand and marsh, where there was not a wreath of smoke or a patch of ripening maize to be seen, they dug holes in a sand-dune, in a hillock meshed in the network of waterways of the Calumet, and in the glacial drift heaped on Stony Island, that mound of ocean-laid coral which rose above a sea of grass, ten miles south of the Chicago River. Under inverted canoes buried deep they cached guns, ammunition, tools, food, clothing and blankets, to which supplies they could escape in case they encountered hostile tribes.

At Burnett's trading-post he found a letter from his wife, to carry with him when he went

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down the Kankakee to join Black Partridge's band of hunters. His letter reached her by the last rowboat of the season to be sent south from Mackinac. She carried that over an aching and rebellious heart all winter. Not until he returned to the St. Joseph and took Louis' furs up, in May, did she hear from him again:

"We have had months of such adventure as the French explorers of a century and a quarter ago must have experienced," he wrote. "This western shore of Lake Michigan is much colder than the eastern, with incessant gales and great depths of snow. With the first blizzard Indians, game animals and even wolves seek the shelter of the timber belts along the prairie streams. Traveling constantly, we visited scattered camps of Pottawottomies, Miamis, Kickapoos and Winnebagoes, in the valleys of the Kankakee, the Illinois, the Rock and the Milwaukee rivers, covering a radius of a hundred miles from the Chicago Plain. We paid our way in silver trinkets, trophies of the chase, and music. I have made a few important friends and spread wide the report that I have come to trade. Only once did we meet with serious hostility.

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"We had come down the Green Bay trail from the Milwaukee River, and sought the hospitality of a band of Kickapoos who had set up their pole-and-hide tepees in the woods on the North Branch of the Chicago River. They robbed us of everything, and drove us out on to the frozen marsh at nightfall. We had no means of building a fire, so we were obliged to dig ourselves into a drift to sleep, at the risk of wolves coming down from the wooded ridge which encircles this plain around the north and west. It was twenty miles to our nearest cache on Stony Island. We had to break a trail through three feet of snow, tie our clothing to our necks, and swim the ice-glazed river; then in a blinding snow-storm, follow the shore, where mountainous waves crashed over the sand-bars and drenched us to the skin. We dug up our supplies and camped by a huge fire in the lee of the hill. Well, we learned something. In this country caches must be made in the timber belts. But the experience was worth all I paid for it, in seeing how well a fine fellow could behave. Chandonnai is not a robust man, and he nearly died; but he never lost his urbanity.

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"‘Monsieur John,’ he observed, as soon as he could speak, ‘those Kickapoos, they lack *savoir faire*. I felt *de trop*.’ I rolled over and over in the snow and howled with delight.

“In the spring we were far down in the valley of the Illinois, at Starved Rock, where La Salle built a fort and gathered twenty thousand Indians around him. We hurried up the Des Plaines, reaching the portage just as the ice broke in all the streams. The waters spread over the wooded bottom-lands, driving great herds of buffalo, deer and elk, besides foxes and wolves, to the green prairie, and setting the beaver to work at their dams. We had hidden a canoe on the ridge, and had to carry the boat only a mile or so over the low wooded rise, in order to launch it again on Mud Lake, a depression which is filled in time of flood by the overflow from the South Branch of the Chicago River.

“We found the entire plain of two hundred and fifty square miles under water, glittering pools of melted snow lying everywhere between tufts of marsh grass, and an intricate network of streams draining into a weedy, sluggish river. Near the mouth this waterway is turned

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by a long sand-bar, and forced to flow southward a half-mile before it can discharge its floods into Lake Michigan. This plain is a playground for icy winds, driving rains and drifting fogs. The sandy muck is a mile deep, and one is cold and wet all the time, but somehow it makes for an amazing energy. Never fear but that great things will be done here. It's the center of things—the natural outlet and inlet of travel and trade for an enormously rich and undeveloped region.

"A short canal cut across Mud Lake and that wooded ridge would let boats through to the waters of the Mississippi. And if the sand-bar were dredged out, the river would rush into a harbor where a fleet of vessels could ride at anchor. I wanted to put a good spade into the hands of every one of the hundreds of Indians who had come to shoot duck and geese. Water-fowl nest in such numbers on this vast marsh that they darken the sky and deafen the ears. The Indians come in March, camping in the open on a bit of elevated ground which lies above the floods in the elbow of the river, on the south bank. That is the only possible site for the proposed fort. On the

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north bank, opposite this point, three half-breed trappers, with small stocks of goods for trading, live in cabins with their Pottawotomie squaws. Trade drains back over the Illinois River to Peoria Lake, and on through St. Louis and other old French towns on the Mississippi.

"A great trade could be developed here and turned eastward. There is not another such chance on the continent for a man of daring, endurance and vision. I shall have work for a month here in Mackinac, sorting my furs and buying goods for Louis. He's had a good season, which gives me more capital than I had counted upon having for a new venture."

He said nothing of coming home. Between the lines she read that he would wait to hear from her, and for her consent to his return to the Chicago River. For a day and a night she wrestled with herself, praying for strength to bear another year of absence and a winter of death-like silence. Then she wrote:

"Go on! Go on! But if you love me, John, come for me next year. Don't you remember? We were to do all those brave things together. They thrill me too. This 'Little ship,' with all

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her sails furled, rocks idly at anchor, while her captain is off to his port of dreams. Trust me John. I'm a stanch little craft and could weather any gale."

"Dearest and bravest lady in the world," he wrote back, "I cannot take you next year, nor any year until this war is fought out. There are two thousand warriors within three days' march of the Chicago River, and with the exception of small bands of Miamis they are all armed from Fort Malden. The United States is unlikely to build anything more than a small post here, with a company of soldiers for a garrison, and that might easily do more harm than good. The Indians would be irritated by a show of force, but would not be overawed by such a weak one. I should not rely upon that for protection, but, as I have always done, upon the personal relations I can establish with the tribes of the region. Every year should make my position more secure. Do not fear for me. In case of an outbreak I could easily escape, if not burdened with a family, around the head of the Lake in a canoe. The Miamis would protect me, and I have a good deal of confidence in Chief Black Partridge. He wears

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a medal given him by General Wayne for services to American troops in Ohio, and is a friend of Captain William Wells, the famous scout of Fort Wayne. But his tribe is unruly, and he might not be able to control his young braves.

"Whoop-ee! I'm off! I have chartered a fleet of long boats to take down a stock of goods, and must go with it to get everything under some sort of roof. Le Mai occupies the largest and best cabin on the north bank of the river, and I think I can rent storage room of him."

In September a voyageur arrived from St. Joseph with an account of the summer's work. Le Mai had given house room to the goods, and John Kinzie had built a pole-and-bark hut, lined with buffalo robes, for a cook and bunk house. Next year, if Le Mai refused to sell, he would be prepared to build his own store.

"We spent some weeks in the oak woods six or seven miles out, felling trees. Hitching ourselves with rope harnesses, we dragged the logs to the bank of the South Branch. When the river freezes over we'll pull them down-stream. Ponies aren't strong enough for this work, and

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there isn't a horse within a hundred miles. If we had one he'd break his legs in the bog holes. Darling, this scrub-oak is as hard as iron, full of flinty knots, and as crooked as a nest of snakes. A saw cannot be used on it. It has to be split with axes and wedges, and the coarse splinters dressed down with a tomahawk. I'd bet a beaver pelt against a muskrat's that old Hercules would curl up and die on this job of splitting puncheons out of scrub-oak. The building of the smallest log fort and stockade here would be a labor of incredible difficulties."

In the spring there was another letter:

"Dearest—I assure you that we are very much alive, after a winter on this frozen marsh. The wind howled all the time like a pack of wolves, and the waves crashed like artillery on the sand-bars. An immense depth of snow was laid, so the Indians could not come in to trade. At one time I was alone for a month. I had sent Chandonnai to the Miami camps to negotiate for the winter's catch of furs, and Le Mai went off with his squaw on what he called a 'trapping spree.' Ouilmette and Pettell decided to take their squaws and make a party of it.

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"Well, I got out of fire-wood at once. I could not manage those scrub-oak logs alone, so I went over to the sand-bar, half a mile to the east, to cut dwarf willows and cottonwoods. Spray froze on me as fast as it fell. I made a sledge of a wet Buffalo hide stretched on poles and left out to freeze, on which to drag the wood home. By working half of every day I got enough fuel to keep the fire going all night. A stray wolf skulked around the hut, and I was so lonesome that I encouraged his visits by throwing out chunks of jerked venison. I had my Bible and Fox's *Martyrs* to prepare me for the next world, but, darling, I pined and fretted for an almanac. Had to keep an account of the days by notching a stick. That has its pitfalls for a 'releegious mon.' If I've missed making a notch now and then I 'dinna ken' which day of the week I've been keeping holy.

"I'm coming home—I'm coming home to my deserted bride this summer! For ten weeks in paradise! Set a torch in the pier as you did on that night of our renewed betrothal. I'll shed my Indian blanket, and get my hair cut and a proper shave in Mackinac. Chandonnai

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and I do our best for each other with a scalping-knife, but we get to looking like wild men."

It was in the middle of July when he appeared, transformed into the gaunt frontiersman, inarticulate at times from living much in silence, and with the far-seeing, wary look of a man who gazes over wide and hostile solitudes. He had raced up the river, and was breathing hard like a spent runner when his arms closed around her.

"Tell me how much you love me. Don't talk of anything else." He kissed her with lips quivering with tenderness and pale with passion long repressed. His keenest memory at the moment was of a time of pain. "I could get a letter from you only two or three times a year, none all winter. Last fall Mr. Burnett sent your letter around by a passing Indian. He dropped it in the water and carried it wet in his pouch. I couldna make anything out of that blurred pulp. I wanted to strangle the clumsy fool. I lay out on the marsh all night and pulled up grass by the roots. My ain wife, tell me how much you love me."

He wanted to do nothing else for days but eat "ceevilized" food, sleep in a "ceevilized"

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bed and, lying on his back in the garden, watch the robins in the cherry-trees and pretty Peggy flickering about like a restless sunbeam in the shadow of her mother. And he wanted his bonny leddy to sit beside him with some bit of dainty needlework and distract his mind with gay, inconsequent talk and laughter. He never could understand the many urgent errands which kept her jumping up and down and running here and there.

Long before he, she was up and out in the dewy mornings. In the dark of the loft chamber she buttoned and laced herself into a short homespun gown and elkskin moccasins, so swiftly and silently as not to disturb him. Then, scrambling down those absurd ladder stairs, she flitted from the dairy to the garden and out to the pasture, directing her Pawnee woman and the men about the work of house and farm. The first morning he was at home John Kinzie followed her to the meadow where Black Jim was training a bunch of pack-ponies, loading and unloading them, making them ford a small creek, and leading them over a bridge of a single tree trunk. Peggy, mounted like a papoose, with her heels digging into the flanks

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and her gold hair flying, was galloping around the field.

"Well, Little-ship-under-full-sail, tacking out of harbor in the wind of dawn! Why do you do it? I'm a thrifty Scot, come hame with a pocket full of siller, and weel able to afford a lady wife."

"The place has to be managed, and I've no man about the house." She snuggled within the circle of his arm contentedly, and tilted a competent chin up in a way that challenged his attention. "You think me a fine lady, you auld jo John, but I'm not."

"You've lived soft this many a year," he pronounced it "saft," and she loved him for it.

"I'm living as hard as circumstances permit. A feather-bed smothers me," she laughed.

"It doesna smother me. I felt like a tired angel sinking into a cloud last night. I've been sleeping on marsh grass heaped into a bunk of scrub-oak puncheons."

"With hundreds of Indians shooting all those wild geese and ducks every spring? I'd have a houseful of feather-beds in no time!"

"No doubt. It's very wonderful how un-

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comfortable a stupid man can go on making himself." He sighed in discouragement, and pondered on that mystery for a time. Then he told her that he had bought Le Mai's cabin, and taken all three of those French trappers into his employ as voyageurs. "'Voilà!' as Chandonnai would say, behold me, fair lady, I am the Laird o' the Chicago River!

"It's an old log house built in the French manner by a free Negro, Jean Baptist Pointe de Saible, from the island of San Domingo. Dinna ask me how he got there! A successful trader, he sold out to Le Mai a few years ago and went down to Peoria Lake. The Indians love him. They say he is very black, very French, very rich in furs, usually very drunk. Anyhow, he's a remarkable man. He made lazy Indians think it some sort of sport to help him get out oak logs and build a good house sixty feet long and twenty-five wide—more room than I need at present.

"And that isna all. He planted two fine cottonwood-trees at the rear for shade, cleared the weeds and swamp trash from a sloping lawn, fenced it in neat ash pickets, and set out four Lombardy poplars at the foot, on the

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river bank. He had to bring the saplings from Canada, a thousand miles, in open boats, and over wild portages!"

Her eyes sparkled with sudden hope. "Why, John, half of that house would make a home. I can go with you now."

He set his lips firmly and shook his head. "It wasna even a good store until I had ripped off the rotten roof, rebarked it, and thatched it with clean grass, and paid the squaws to scour the logs inside and out with ashes. If we can snake some white-ash or maple logs down from the ridge, and dig a saw-pit, Chandonnai and I will put in a good floor and doors, counters and bunks. With the slabs for dependable fire-wood it won't be so bad. I have a fine frying-pan and a pot, and a chain suspended from a roof pole for a spit, to roast meat. Takes one man's time to attend to a spit, so we dinna use it often."

That picture of primitive discomfort made her heart ache, but she knew better than to pity him. "Cornplanter would have turned up his nose at such a lodge," she laughed. "But it's not so lonely, now, John? You have employees coming and going, and some friends."

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"Oh yes. Indians clutter up the place." He chuckled. "It occurred to me to tell Black Partridge that I'd married the Princess Nelly, but Chandonnai thought I'd better not. I couldn't produce you, and he might think it the too clever boasting of a sharp trader. So I'm keeping it dark."

She held her breath a moment. "You can produce me, John. Indeed, indeed, I could help you. I'd take that costume—"

"You darling Delilah! You'd shear Samson of his strength." He held her away from him at arm's-length, and swallowed hard. But almost at once he relaxed and began to talk of still larger plans. As rapidly as he could find men to manage them he meant to establish branch posts on the Kankakee, the Illinois, the Rock and the Milwaukee rivers. In a year or so he would sell the store on the St. Joseph and use Louis in the West. He would need boats and ponies for his voyageurs.

"Are you training that bunch for me? I can use them."

"No—no! You can't have them, John." She spoke on an impulse which she did not analyze at the time. With a sinking heart

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she realized that he was wedded to the wilderness, planning a large and expanding scheme of life on that far frontier. Poor Princess Nelly was to have only such brief periods of bliss and pain with him as he could snatch from his colossal task, unless—

She tried that summer to prove her fitness to be his mate in the wilds. She challenged him to walk the eight miles to Detroit and back in four hours. She paddled up to the fisheries in Lake St. Clair and shared the work of a camp. With a bundle of clothing tied to her neck, and supporting Peggy with one hand, she swam the wide Strait to the Canadian bank. She caught ponies, mounted them from the ground, and rode like a squaw with a neighbor's baby on her back. And at the end of every day of hard play and toil, she appeared cool and delectable in a dimity gown at a dainty supper-table, where he gazed with awe at the golden butter from her dairy.

"You couldn't have that out there," he asserted, for he saw through all her guile. "You'd be eating deer tallow."

"Stupid!" she laughed. "A cow can be driven anywhere that ponies can travel. And

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from all I hear there is grass on the prairie for cows to eat. I'd make candles of that deer tallow for you to read your silly almanac by."

"You can beat me at argument," he admitted, but she could not beat down his resolution. He left suddenly, just after the equinoctial storm, in the last days of September. Again she watched him from a bastion of the fort until he had disappeared in the woods. The wife of Capt. William Whistler, who was standing at the foot of the steps when she ran down, threw up her hands as though scandalized by that lady in gay haste.

"Mrs. Kinzie! I'm shocked. Any one would think you were glad your husband was gone!"

"If your husband was at home only ten weeks in two years what would you do?"

"Something desperate, my dear, no doubt."

"It's so sweet of you to understand." She took the face of her friend between her hands and kissed it violently, in the exuberance of her spirits. "Don't be surprised by anything you may hear."

With this cryptic remark she raced Peggy around the wall of the town to the beach. But

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not until she was in the privacy of her own curtained corner of the loft chamber that night, with the household asleep, did she give voice to her thought. Having something tender and determined and merry to say, all in one breath, she fell into a bit of Scotch: "The puir, deluded mon. He thinks I amna gaeing."

She meant to give him a week's start, for he would stop for a few days at the post on the St. Joseph. Then, after a sharp frost, there would come the still, bright, hazy weeks of Indian summer, when a leisurely journey could be made with grazing cows. She took no one into her confidence, but she paddled across the river the next morning to an Indian village to see an Ottawa chief. There she engaged a guide who knew the old Sauk trail, and an escort of braves, for a small party going west. The Indians were to report to her on a certain evening.

She counted and inspected her ponies, gathered seeds, and marked shrubs and vines whose roots were to be dug up at the last moment. She began to make up bedding and clothing into bundles, and was busy at this task when she was arrested by a thought which made her heart stop and then jump to her throat.

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"No! It can't be!" But she sat down in a dormer-lighted nook with her chin in her hand and looked out over the water for a long hour.

A week of suspended effort went by, and another. Putting the thought from her she began her preparations again. She had worked only an hour when she suddenly grew sick and dizzy. For the second time in her life—the first was before Peggy was born—she fainted.

She came to herself in a moment and sat up, smiled tremulously, and brushed away a nervous tear—both happy and exasperated over this sweet, delaying mystery, then proud and happy.

"Well, Madame John, you'll bide a wee where you are," she said to herself whimsically. Then she knelt by her bed for something like a whispered prayer: "You must be a sturdy little man, my dear, dauntless and true-hearted, like your father, for you and I are going all those wild leagues to be with him."

XIII

THE HUNDRED WILD LEAGUES

THE long-delayed order for the building of a fort at the mouth of the Chicago River was received at Detroit in May, 1803, by Capt. William Whistler. His instructions were delivered by the schooner *Tracy*, one of the earliest United States naval vessels to appear on the Great Lakes. Built in the boat-yard of the seven-year-old settlement of Cleveland, it was loaded with military supplies brought over the mountains through Pittsburgh; and it was bound on a voyage of discovery into Lake Michigan, where no sail had been seen since La Salle took the *Griffin* to Green Bay, a hundred and thirty years before.

Mrs. Kinzie hurried to town as soon as she heard the news. She felt a kinship to the venturesome little craft anchored in the roadstead, and if it could not wait to bear her

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away to the port of her heart's desire, it must at least serve her own long flight. She was on her way to the fort when she met Mrs. Whistler and her new daughter-in-law, the bride whom Lieutenant Whistler had brought home from the East on his graduation from West Point. The son was detailed to go with his father to the new post, and the two ladies were hurrying from one little shop to another, buying everything they would need for a year. The *Tracy* was to make only one voyage out every summer.

"You are going?" Mrs. Kinzie clapped her hands in applause. "There will be two white women west of Detroit, so John can't make that excuse any more."

"Soldiers' wives march to order," was the cheerful reply of the elder lady. The bride was scared white, but she held her spine as stiff as a ramrod. "Of course! B-Billy can't go without me." The women of this remarkable family were the mothers of soldiers, pioneers in railroad engineering, and of a distinguished American artist who paid an inspired tribute to his mother.

"Perhaps Mr. Kinzie will come for you next year, after the fort is built."

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"You might ask him. How large a force is the captain taking out?"

"One short company—sixty-nine men in all, including officers and musicians."

She was sick with dismay. John would not think much of that puny force, nor of the fort it could build and defend with three hundred miles of wilderness between it and Detroit. But the smile never left her lips as she spoke to her brave friend archly of a personal matter.

"Don't tell Mr. Kinzie my dear secret, please," and she blushed with charming candor and pride.

"My dear! He doesn't know?"

"He does not, indeed. I'm perfectly well, and I will not have him worrying about me. He's so very busy establishing his branch posts that he cannot come home this summer. If there's good news he'll hear it in time, and bad news keeps. Good-by. I must see Captain Whistler on business."

When that officer was once convinced that he could not turn her from her purpose, he entered whole-heartedly into a dark conspiracy with her. She left a sum of money in his hands to be spent in Mackinac for such unromantic

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items as dressed lumber, doors, sash, lime, glass, and hardware, and she engaged to pay for a share of the services of any carpenters or boat-builders employed in joinery work on the fort. Hurrying home, she stripped her home of its best bedsteads, tables, chairs and clothing-chests, and into soap-kettles, tubs and stone churns she packed the utensils of the kitchen and dairy. She got these down to the beach by boat-load instalments after nightfall, and the captain smuggled them into the hold of the vessel with his own goods. It occurred to him that Mr. Kinzie might recognize her property when it was unloaded on the Chicago River.

"No, he won't. He's far-sighted. He never sees anything this side of the horizon—except me," she laughed.

Having burned *her* bridges—left herself no comfortable place in which to sit or lie down—she locked the house, that no neighbor might discover its dismantled condition. Leaving Black Jim and the Pawnees in their cabins to manage the farm, she took Peggy to her brother's home in Sandwich, Canada, to await the birth of her baby.

Reports were brought to her there of the

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sailing of the *Tracy* with her friends. The soldiers had marched overland. In true pioneer fashion each man carried an ax swung over his shoulder, and, breaking step with the music of fife and drum, straggled across Prairie Ronde to the woods. But they made that march without mishap in thirty days, and they did valiant work in widening the old Sauk trail, leaving a raft roped to the bank of every considerable stream for the use of travelers, and a tree-trunk foot-bridge dropped across every gully.

Early in September, when her "sturdy little man" was over two months old, Mrs. Kinzie had a letter from her husband.

"Dear Heart," he wrote, "it would have thrilled you to see that big canoe with wings drop anchor in Chicago harbor. It was the vanguard of the fleets to come! Hundreds of Indians, who had never seen a sailing-vessel before, came in and camped on the sand-bar until the cargo was brought ashore in row-boats. The soldiers had arrived six weeks before and swarmed into the oak woods. They rafted logs down-stream, and had a building up to shelter the military supplies by the time the vessel arrived.

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"The Whistler ladies were left at Mr. Burnett's fortified trading-post at the mouth of the St. Joseph. They should, of course, have been left in Detroit. I told the captain that no one but a hopeless ass would bring white women out to this country. The Indians look upon the building of a fort here as a hostile move, and the smallness of the force excites their contempt. The whole business is a tragic blunder. In case of war we would be cut off immediately by thousands of armed savages."

Reading this, and carrying it above her heart, she lost something of her zest for the adventure, but she never faltered in her resolution. Unobserved, she slipped across the river and into her house one evening. She would have to steal out of it like a fugitive, for if her intention were known, her brother and hosts of friends would try to stop her. At dawn Black Jim and her Indian servants drove the cows and laden ponies up the fields and into the woods. Skirting the edge of the forest around the town they got the animals well out on the trail to the west before night. Leaving them in a grassy glade under the care of the Ottawa escort she had engaged, the Negro

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returned to the house. At three o'clock in the morning he tapped on a window to waken her.

"Madame John"—for that was the French manner of address used by her neighbors and servants, and she loved it the best of all—"it's no long tam befo' mawning. Bettah wake *les enfants*." Born in Kentucky but associating for years with French voyageurs, he had a curious, mixed dialect.

She hurried into a short gown of blue homespun and stout elkskin moccasins and leggings, and covered her hair with a knotted kerchief. She strapped the little son into the Indian bark cradle in which she had accustomed him to sleep, much to the wondering amusement of her friends. But, indeed, there was no other way in which an infant could be so safely and easily carried in the wilds. Then she waked Peggy, who had been let into the exciting secret only the day before.

The little nine-year-old girl tumbled out of bed at once, with muffled laughter which echoed uncannily in the dark and empty house, and struggled with elusive strings and buttons. She caught and mounted her pony in the dim

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and dew-drenched pasture, and she had to clap her hand over her mouth when she saw the blinking little bark-craddled brother hanging like any papoose on the back of the grinning Negro.

Four hours' hard riding brought them up with the rest of the party, and after a camp-fire breakfast they were off again. But because of the frequency with which they were obliged to stop and let the cows graze and lie down, not more than ten miles' progress could be made in a day. These animals could not toe the log bridges as could the sure-footed ponies, and had to be driven up or down stream to shelving banks which they could negotiate. And the timid creatures bolted at every alarm. They were stampeded by the antlered head of a stag lifted above the undergrowth beside the trail. The howling of wolves and hooting of owls at night disturbed their sleep, and the occasional half-human cry of a lynx or wildcat brought them plunging to their feet and straining at their tethers. Their fatigue and nervous excitement caused their milk to fail, and one of them died in agony from eating a poisonous weed.

But aside from the piteous plight of these

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petted domestic animals, the first ten days of the journey was an idyllic faring through such sylvan wilds as Mrs. Kinzie had not seen since she rode to Niagara with Cornplanter. Memory stirred to the old enchantment, and she peopled every vista and copse, purling brook and tinkling spring with the little folk of myth and faery for the delighted Peggy. At night two camp-fires were built, some distance apart, one for the family and servants, and the other for the Ottawas, with the cows and ponies tethered and hobbled between. There were hardships and she was alert for mishaps, but that there could be any real peril for so numerous a party she never dreamed.

She had a near-tragic awakening. In crossing a deep gully over a tree trunk slippery with the hoar frost of a sharp morning, Black Jim lost his foothold and dropped from sight. There was a scream from the baby as he sank into the cold, muddy water at the bottom, then a dreadful silence while the Negro was scrambling frantically up the crumbling clay bank. Mrs. Kinzie fled like a deer across that ice-glazed rocking footway, and had the child in a dry blanket in a moment.

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"Build a fire! Heat some water! Peggy dear, don't cry. Little brother will be all—all right." But she was not so sure of that herself. His lips were blue, his tiny body rigid from the shock and chill. Under the blanket she rubbed his icy limbs with whisky until a wooden bowl of warm water was brought. Not until he began to gurgle and coo with the comfort of the bath did she cover his small face with tears and kisses.

"*Bon Dieu*, Madame John, dis fool nigger nebber dar' ca'y dat li'l' *enfant* agin." The Negro was still shaking from his fright.

"Yes, you will, you good Jim. If I had slipped with him he'd have gone clear under."

"M'sieu John skin my black hide if anyti'ng happen to his *petit fils*."

"No he wouldn't. He'd blame me." Her voice was all but lost in a choking misery. Her confidence in her judgment and courage was shaken. Because she lay awake that night, pressed close to Peggy, and keeping the little son warm in her bosom, she heard a stealthy prowling around her tepee of hemlock boughs. Getting up noiselessly, she stooped to the ear of the Pawnee woman who slept like a guardian

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dog before the opening, and told her to wake Jim. Slipping around the tepee with one of her father's dueling pistols, she confronted an Ottawa.

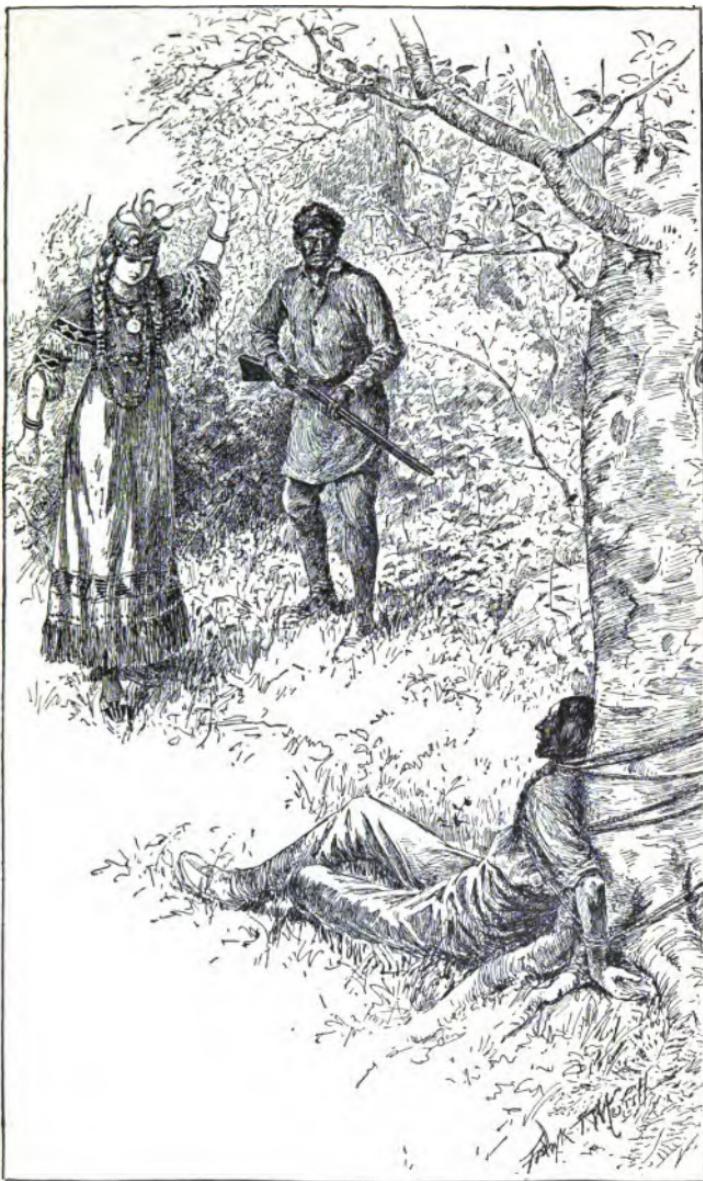
"What do you want?"

"Firewater. Give it to me, white squaw!"

She remembered the whisky, of which she carried a few flasks for such emergencies as the baby's cold ducking. She gave him the rest of the bottle she had opened, smashing it over his head and drenching his face with the fiery liquid. In his stunned and half-strangled recoil she was able to snatch the knife he had lifted.

"Take him behind that big beech-tree and tie him up," she whispered to the Negro. Because of the restless movements of the cows and ponies, not a sound of this disturbance reached the other camp. "Stand guard, Jim, and if he speaks or makes any signal kill him with his own knife as you would a wolf." Before the Indian's sullen eyes she flung the other flasks into a gully, where they broke with tinkling sounds.

What disturbed her most was the insolent way in which the savage had addressed her as



SHE APPEARED BEFORE THE CAPTIVE IN ALL THE SPLENDOR OF
THE PRINCESS NELLY

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"white squaw." She realized suddenly that, with the exception of Silverheels, who had tried to capture her for a bride, she had never known the Indian brute at all. As the cherished sister of Cornplanter, and then as the wife of a British officer, she had been hedged around with rank, and her romantic story had lent her a glamour that had appealed to the primitive mind. But here, in the garb suitable to rough travel, and sharing the work of the camp, she was obviously unprotected. Perhaps, to her escort, she had fallen from her high estate, and could be insulted and threatened with impunity. Indians were always impressed with pomp and ceremony. She had a defense in a theatrical personality, could protect herself and her children by reviving a fading legend.

The woods were filling with the diffused light of dawn when she appeared before the captive in all the splendor of the Princess Nelly at Niagara, a being so beautiful, so rich, so invested with authority, that the cowardly fellow took up his camp bundle, when released, and fled homeward along the brightening trail. She received the report of the Ottawas that one of their number had deserted, with

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the imperious demand that any others who wished to go must depart at once. And she informed Black Jim aloud that there must be no accidents, for she had no more firewater.

But after that she or the Negro was always on guard, for the Pawnees, while faithful, were timid, and not to be trusted. She never really slept. At night one ear of apprehension was always open. Long afterward her husband said to her, "You came through the woods of Michigan at the most beautiful season of the year."

"Did I? I never noticed. The most beautiful thing I saw was your big log store on the Saint Joseph."

The journey had seemed so endless, a nightmare from which she could not awaken, that she was astonished when the Ottawa guide ran back and shouted. The cavalcade, hurrying and bunching together in confusion, for the cows and ponies sensed the excitement, all came out at once on the high bank of a noble stream. Louis and 'Toinette ran from the store, and voyageurs, squaws and papooses from the cabins. Louis had seen the wife of his *bourgeois*, when she was a garrison lady in

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Detroit, and knew her even in that gorgeous guise.

"It's Madame John and *la petite fille!*" he cried, tossing his cap in the air. Never having heard of the small person in the bark cradle, he paid no attention to him until arrested by a pair of big gray eyes, rings of auburn hair on a white forehead, and an estatic wriggle and coo. Then he grabbed the infant and shouted his joy. "It's M'sieu John's *petit fils*, by gosh! Dat's a fine smart trick you play on heem, Madame John." But he became serious at once. "I scare pretty soon dat M'sieu John he bus' up w'en he find hees *belle femme* an' *les enfants* w'ere he no lak it."

She smiled in a weary, bewildered way, as though just waking up from a bad dream. Toinette pushed her into a curtained bunk and began with awe to remove the trappings of royalty. "You ver' seek, Madame John. You retire now. I tak car' you so ver' nice," she said, in her soft, caressing patois.

"No, my dear, I'm perfectly well. I always am; but I do need sleep." She kissed Toinette's small, olive-tinted face on both cheeks in the French manner. "Peggy, you stick to

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Madame Louis like a burr, darling, while mother sleeps." She surrendered the baby to the enraptured 'Toinette, and sank at once into an unconsciousness so deep and prolonged that even Louis was alarmed.

While she slept the equinoctial storm swept through the forest, a sharper frost lit all the woodland fires, and she awoke to see the blue haze of Indian Summer on the grove-dotted meadows of the Parkovash. The Ottawas went back to Detroit, taking the Pawnees with them to find a home with Mrs. Kinzie's brother, for Indian slaves were unknown to tribes of the West, and her possession of these might be dangerous. For the roughest household tasks, now, she must depend upon what help she could get from the squaws of the voyageurs.

It was still the idle season when men could be spared, so the cows and ponies were rafted across the river, to be driven around the sand-dunes and up through the jungle of prairie grass to the fort. Louis could not leave the store, and he would not consent to Madame John and the children going down-stream and around the head of the lake under any less responsible escort. The problem was solved by the arrival

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of Chandonnai. He announced his coming by singing with melancholy passion of a beautiful friend named Susette, who had perished in youth in some vague, poetic manner. He looked like a prince in disguise when he disembarked and sauntered up the slope. Showing no astonishment at all, he kissed the hands of Madame John and of the delighted Peggy.

"I am enchanted," he declared. "I stopped at Burnett's to pay my compliments to the Whistler ladies and to *la belle sauvage*, the trader's squaw. Alas! Monsieur will be desolated," he declared, with the most charming and shameless mendacity. "He is off on the grand tour of his posts, and will not be home before November."

"Oh, what luck!" Mrs. Kinzie cried, for she feared that her John would drop the most urgent business and take her back to Detroit like a naughty child. That would quite crush her spirit. "I will have time to take root before he returns, and it will then be on the edge of winter, with travel impossible."

"*Voilà!* Madame John, permit me to take charge of this affair." As soon as he saw Mrs. Kinzie's court costume, he staged a little

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drama. Madame was to make a spectacular entry into the scene. With the mind of a diplomat, he saw that she could secure the safety of herself and her children, and serve her husband's business interests by arriving in the character of the Princess Nelly, with an escort of royalties.

The little expedition must not be seen, especially from Burnett's post, so they went downstream on a moonlighted night. In the early hours of the morning, when the St. Joseph was shrouded in mist, he and Black Jim pushed the boat through acres of wild rice and turned into a hidden creek. Beaching the canoes, Chandonnai led the party through the woods and down into a hollow rimmed with enormous trees, behind the bluff. On the highest point he built a fire, making much smoke with damp leaves. By dropping a blanket over the smoldering heap, and raising it at measured intervals, he produced the series of puffs, clouds and columns which spelled a smoke signal.

Indians began to arrive after dark—Chief Pokagon, Topenebe, and other dignitaries who expected to see their friend Black Partridgecome

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on some urgent business out of season. But they enjoyed the joke of this French favorite, and when, at a signal, for Chandonnai always raised curtains, the Princess Nelly appeared on the rim of the amphitheater, with her beautiful children and her tall black bodyguard, they were so entertained that they accepted the explanation of how she had come there without question.

Chandonnai was entirely in his element when he trod that grassy stage, with a camp-fire for footlights, and declaimed in flowery Pottawotomie oratory: "Behold! My wild brothers! This is the beloved sister of the great Corn-planter. She wears his silver ring and his string of wampun of adoption. She wears the rich garments in which he loved to deck her, and wampun woven in her braided hair. Now she is the wife of Shaw-nee-aw-kee, the Silverman. You all love and trust that honest, friendly trader, whose house and heart are open to the Indian. She came from Detroit, through a forest where no white woman has traveled since the old French days. She was guarded by the spirits of the wind and fire and water. The sun shone on her path. The moon watched

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over her camp. The streams shrank in their beds until she had passed over. The hunters of the sky lit their starry torches and ran before her on the trail. Now it is fitting that only great chiefs and brave warriors should take her over the big sea-water to the lodge of her husband."

The sheer audacity of it was magnificent. And it succeeded because it appealed to the Indians' love of poetic mystery and of pageantry. They spent half the night decorating themselves in lace-like designs of black, white, and vermilion. Before dawn a fleet of boats was brought around to the beach, and the procession was far down the shore when the rising sun awoke the restless waters of Lake Michigan to a sea of sparkles. One night was spent in camp on the sand-dunes, the early hours of evening given to song and story; and another on a hillock overlooking the netted streams and rolling prairies of the Calumet region. It was late into the third day when the boats ran into the lovely lines of surf which broke over the submerged sand-bars of Chicago harbor.

To any one coming in over the lake, the last half-mile of the river was concealed by the long

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sand-spit, which was covered with a thick growth of stunted cottonwoods, willows and junipers. But there was a glimpse over this barrier of the log stockade raised on the bit of elevated ground in the elbow of the river. The first boats tried to ride the combers and so win their way into the stream, but they were thrown back. Baffled in this, the Indians gave a wild whoop to bring the soldiers on the run out of their half-built fort. They were just in time to see painted chiefs jump from the canoes and splash through the surf, bearing Mrs. Kinzie and Peggy ashore. The baby, swinging in his bark cradle, came in on the back of Black Jim.

"Fire a salute to the first white woman to set her foot in the settlement of Fort Dearborn!" shouted Captain Whistler. The small cannon mounted in the block-house was rammed so tight by excited gunners that it nearly exploded. Chief Topenebe left his canoe at the fort, and with a band of braves started across the prairie on a forty-mile march to the Kankakee, to tell the news to Black Partridge.

It was more than six weeks later when John Kinzie came down the lake shore from his

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branch post on the Milwaukee River. It was dusk, but the wind was from the west and there was no surf on the sand-bar, so his boatmen made the mouth of the stream. The first winter storm was brewing, with snow whirling over the stiffening marsh. When, at the bend of the river around the fort his boatmen struck up the chorus of "Malbrouck" he saw lights in his log store, but these were suddenly obscured as by drawn curtains.

He drew up at the small pier which lay above the row of Lombardy poplars and the picket-fenced lawn. When the sentry shouted a greeting from the fort, he called back, inviting Captain Whistler to a game of chess after supper. "Tell him I'll be as lonesome as a homeless dog." For at such times of homecoming to his cheerless place of business his heart contracted with longing for the sweetheart of his youth, the wife of his maturity, and for the patterning feet of the little children he should have, running down the path to meet him.

The house loomed up, strangely white. A pencil of light came through a glazed and curtained window where none had been before.

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In fumbling for the latch-string his hand closed over a door-knob. Inside he stood dazed, for here was the living-room of the old French farm-house in Detroit. A supper table spread with linen and neatly set with pewter, blue Canton ware and silver stood before a fire which snapped and leaped and sent flickers dancing on the lime-washed walls as though enjoying some rollicking secret. From a high-backed, easy-chair cushioned with bright calico, there came a sneeze about big enough for a rabbit, and the voice of his bonny leddy:

"Do come in, John, and shut the door.
There's a draught on the baby."

A thing all laughter and tears and trembling joy, she lay on his breast in a moment, and lifted the child. "Kiss your little son, John, and your wife. Say that you are glad to see us, then you may scold me all you like. But oh, my dear, my very dear, I could not bear that you should have no home. I could not live without you."

"Nor I without you." He knew all that love could do and be and suffer when he crushed her to his heart. She had borne his child, gone through childbirth alone, and alone she had

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brought her tenderness and devotion and this helpless little pledge of their love in safety across a hundred leagues of wilderness to be with him.

He held her away from him at last, to look at the brave, sweet wonder of her. "How did you get here? I canna believe it."

"I'll tell you about it some time. You haven't looked at the baby. He's as strong as a little pony. And he's the image of you because I had you in my heart for a pattern. What's his name? You have two guesses and a wish."

"I wish it was John."

"Well, it is. But you'd never guess the rest. Once there was a trader of vision and daring, of honesty and friendliness. He pushed the wilderness back so white people could go to live in a beautiful valley. Yet he was loved and trusted even by the savage, treacherous Iroquois. In his old age he came to the rescue of a captive maiden, and he sent her a knight without reproach to win and hold her heart. What other name could there be for our little son but that of John Harris, who brought us together?"

He felt as though he had died and gone to

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heaven. She pushed him, unresisting, into the easy-chair and brought dry moccasins, and she put the baby into his arms. The jolly little man was wide awake now, and ready for a romp. And his wife hung around him, enveloping him in an atmosphere of sweet concern.

"There's butter for supper, John, and a feather-bed for a tired angel." She ran out to the kitchen, laughing, for pretty Peggy had met with some culinary disaster and was signaling frantically for help from the door.

XIV

THE SHADOW OF THE STORM

THE feeling that the United States must fight a second war with England, which had smouldered for a generation, burst into flames with the battle of Tippecanoe on the Wabash, in August, 1811. Only then was it realized in Washington that America was to be stabbed in the back, attacked from the rear by a confederacy of Indians of the Northwest, directed by the British from Fort Malden. John Kinzie rode down to Vincennes at once, across two hundred miles of prairie on which he saw not one white man, to talk with General Harrison. He returned to report to Captain Heald, who had been sent out to Fort Dearborn the year before, when the Whistlers were promoted to the more important post of Fort Wayne. The great Indian-fighter was not satisfied with his victory. The conspiracy had

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not been broken up. The gifted leader of it, Tecumseh, had simply been defeated and driven back to Canada.

"General Harrison thinks the war canna be long delayed, and he recommends that all traders and government agents should stop selling whisky, guns and ammunition to the Indians."

Captain Heald refused to be alarmed. "That would be unjust to the Miamis and Pottawatomies, who have kept the peace faithfully for sixteen years, and who would have nothing to do with Tecumseh."

"The chiefs have kept faith. But many young braves of those tribes were in that battle, and their own leaders have lost control of them."

"But they cannot live without hunting supplies."

"They willna starve," John Kinzie assured him, with a grim smile. "They have ample supplies—for another sort of hunting. Captain, here and on the Saint Joseph I have been among these tribes for twenty years. I never have sold firewater, and now no Indian of this region can buy weapons, bullets or powder in

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any of my stores until this war is fought out."

Captain Heald chuckled. "Then Mr. Irwin, the United States Indian agent here, will get your trade."

"He's welcome to all of my trade that he can get in that scoundrelly way," was the hot retort, "and if you permit it the blood of the innocent will be on your head."

He left the fort less in anger than in a sick dismay that its commander should have so little understanding of the perilous situation. Out of favor there, his advice not wanted, he never went near it during a long winter in which reports came in of outrages on the Ohio and Indiana border. In the Chicago River region there was no disturbance until April. Then a characteristic raid by a band of savages who never were identified and punished made the terrified little settlement shrink in upon the fort.

Early in the morning of a day never to be forgotten in the annals of Chicago, Mrs. Kinzie was called to the house of Mrs. Burns. This one white neighbor on the north bank of the river lived a long half-mile west of the cluster of buildings, cabins of voyageurs and

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the "mansion" which made up the big trading establishment. Clapboarded and shingle-roofed now, with all its outhouses and its neat fences of hewn ash pickets lime-washed to as snowy a whiteness as the snug little fort, the Kinzie house had grown to six or seven large rooms and a spacious piazza which ran the length of its southward facing front. With a half-dozen branch stores on inland streams, each with its French manager and its complement of *coureurs de bois*, boats and ponies, John Kinzie had realized his ambition of turning trade eastward through Chicago Harbor. The sailing-sloop *Adams* now took his furs up to Mackinac, and brought down his goods and every comfort of living for his family.

And, oh, to him and to his brave lady, that wilderness home had grown so dear, so dear! In it they had had more than eight happy and prosperous years. Three more children had been born there, to clamor for stories of the Princess Nelly and to dance to the music of the Silverman's violin. And Margaret McKillip, the eldest daughter of the house, had been married there to Lieutenant Helm. The bride of a young graduate from West Point at

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sixteen, pretty Peggy had crossed the river to live in the fort, as one of two ladies in a garrison of seventy-five men.

With the exception of a half-dozen married soldiers, whose names are now unknown, only two other white families were then living within the limits of the future city of Chicago. Mr. Burns had built the cabin on the western edge of the settlement, on the north bank of the river, and Mr. Charles Lee had a good log house south of the garrison gardens. An enterprising man with some capital, he had improved a large farm—Lee's Place—four miles up the South Branch. There he employed a manager and sundry discharged soldiers, and he supplied the fort and the trading-post with horses, cattle, corn and hay. Lee's Place was the hope and pride of a settlement which had to bring flour and pork around the lakes from Detroit.

Life on that outpost was lonely, and except for the seasonal activities of the fur trade the days were uneventful. The bugle which sounded the reveille was everybody's alarm-clock. John Harris Kinzie, who was eight, going fast on nine, always jumped out of bed and

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ran to the river bank, to salute the flag when it was run up the staff to wave above the white stockade, block-houses and crowded roofs of the rude little fort. He was nicknamed "Little John" because he meant to grow up to be as tall and strong and fearless as Robin Hood's famous henchmen, and be his father's right-hand man in the fur trade.

Breakfast call, sick call, drill, guard-mounting, and the strains of "Old English Roast Beef" by the full band of four pieces at the noon dinner hour, made pleasant and business-like divisions of time for the little boy, and as far back as he could remember he had gone to bed to the merry tatoo of "Little Cock Sparrow."

That historic day in April of 1812 was exceptional, for things began to happen immediately after drill on the esplanade. After a winter's confinement the first boat-load of soldiers was allowed to go up the river for a day's fishing on Mud Lake. Mr. Kinzie came out of his fur-warehouse to look at them with angry amazement. Fully a dozen of the defenders of that weak little post were off for a holiday, to a distance of seven miles, and going unarmed! This was criminal folly. With his

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Scotch jaw set in a grim line, he strode back to his work without a word.

Presently Mrs. Kinzie was called to Mrs. Burns's house on some errand which might detain her all day. So Peggy came over to look after the children, for their French nurse, Josette, was a flighty young thing and not to be trusted in emergencies. Then the corporal who rode to Fort Wayne once a month for the mail came in with letters and papers for every one, and with a military despatch for Captain Heald. And what made Little John nearly jump out of his moccasins with delight, Capt. William Wells of the Indiana Territorial Militia came with him.

This famous scout, whose breast was hung with medals won in border warfare, was a hero whose life story was a thrilling romance. Stolen from a family of Indian-fighters in Kentucky when a boy, he had been taken up to the Maumee River and adopted by Chief Little Turtle. Growing to manhood in the Miami village, and becoming enamoured of wild life, he had fought with the Indians against Harmer and St. Clair in Ohio. But in the hottest part of the battle with General Wayne at Fallen

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Timbers he had turned to the chief and held out his hand in farewell. "Good-bye, brother," he said. "I have seen my own people and am going back to them. I love you all, but if you attack Americans I will kill as many of you as I can. And you may kill me if you can."

Won by his loyalty to his race, and by his bravery, the Miamis let him go in safety to the camp of the enemy. After their defeat they made him a chief of the tribe, and now for sixteen years he had kept them faithful to their pledge of peace and friendship. When Captain Heald married his favorite cousin, Rebecca Wells, in Kentucky, the scout rode to the wedding with an escort of Miami braves, and he took lonely little Fort Dearborn, which the War Department in Washington sometimes forgot, under his special protection. In any threatened peril he could be depended upon to ride to the rescue.

Something was in the wind now, for within an hour the Pottawottomie chiefs, Topenebe, Winnemeg, the enlightened half-breed who called himself "The Sauganash," or Englishman, and Black Partridge who wore the peace medal given him by General Wayne at the

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treaty of Greenville, come in over the prairie from the Kankakee. Instead of crossing the river to loaf on the sunny piazza with the Kinzie children until the noon dinner hour, as they usually did, they went directly to the fort.

Almost at once Captain Heald sent for Mr. Irwin, the Indian agent, for Mr. Lee and Mr. Kinzie, and every one of any importance, military and civilian, disappeared into the agency house. This two-storied structure of four large rooms and a middle hall, which stood west of the fort between the esplanade and a bottomless slough, was so flimsily built of scrub-oak puncheons, and flanked by light scaffolding verandas, that it was popularly dubbed "Cobweb Castle." Very soon Lieutenant Helm left the conference and, calling a soldier, ran to a canoe. He had the man push across to the Kinzie pier, so he could explain his errand and say good-by to Peggy. Little John begged to go with his brother-in-law.

"You must ask father or mother," Peggy decided promptly.

"Father's at the pow-wow in Cobweb Castle, and mother's at Mrs. Burns's house."

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"Well, stop at the cabin and ask her. And tell her not to worry. I'm giving Captain Wells and the chiefs a dinner that they'll remember for a month of Sundays."

"Oh, glory, Peggy! They'll be sure to stay overnight. Let's have a party, and get mother to dress up as Princess Nelly, and Captain Wells to tell stories. He knows some whoppers."

"All right. I'll see about the party, and get Chandonnai to think of something special. Good-by Helmie," for her bridegroom's christened name was an oddity, impossible for everyday use. With the April sun on her golden hair and the light of youth and love in her eyes of gentian blue, Peggy waved from the pier. Then she ran back to the house to see what supplies were in storeroom and cellar, dairy, poultry-yard and smoke-house; and she called the willing squaws from the voyageurs' cabins to come and help prepare the feast. The Kinzie mansion was famous for its hospitality, and the social gatherings to which every one, of all colors and conditions, was welcome, made red-letter days for the remote little settlement. Mrs. Kinzie herself always made the big boilerful of coffee, a rare

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treat where the common drink was a decoction of roasted lotus seeds; and she skimmed cream generously into her silver water-pitcher.

In answer to Little John's halloo from the river she ran from the Burns cabin to the river bank, with the energy and gaiety of a girl. "Do you think it safe for him to go, Helmie?" she asked her young soldier son-in-law.

"Reasonably so. There have been fresh outbreaks in Ohio, and an army is to gather in Dayton and march to Detroit, to impress the Indians. General Hull has been sent out from the East."

"Who is General Hull? I never heard of him."

"A veteran officer who distinguished himself in the Revolution."

"Why, he must be an old man! And he cannot know anything of these Western Indians. Why wasn't that task given to General Harrison?"

"The authorities in Washington probably think of Harrison as a backwoodsman—not big enough." She just stared at him in silence. Indeed, there was nothing to say about a

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matter that had aroused the Northwestern frontier to fury and despair. Such bungling could lead only to disaster. After a moment Lieutenant Helm went on. "Captain Heald thinks it nonsensical to be alarmed, but he yielded to the majority opinion. Captain Wells, Father Kinzie and the chiefs insisted that the horses and cattle should be brought down from Lee's Place to the fort. So I am going up to help Mr. Lee's men raft the animals across the river and drive them down."

"That is the least that should be done." She reflected that Captain Heald was also from the East, a New England "Yankee," who knew nothing of the West and was unwilling to learn. "Is the garrison here to be reinforced, and are the supplies to be increased?"

Lieutenant Helm shook his head. "The *Tracy* will probably fetch the usual cargo around this summer."

"Mother, may I go? I could take a gun." Little John brought them back to the question of the moment. His brows were puckered in a thoughtful frown, for the child heard many serious matters discussed.

"No, my son, you could not. Just use

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your common-sense and do exactly as Helmie tells you. Your father has managed to live out here a good many years without using a gun except when he was hungry." He needed the experience, for a boy had to grow up fast and take a man's part early in that wild country. But her heart ached in letting him go, and she continued to wave her kerchief until the boat turned south at the forking of the stream and disappeared.

She stopped to look abroad over the green prairie and the new-leaving woods on the distantly circling ridge. The water had run from the marsh, and far to the south herds of deer had come in to feed. Red-wings and meadow larks were in the grass, which within another month would be thick with wild flowers. Ducks were flying over Mud Lake, gulls wheeling above the surf which foamed up the sandy beach, and a fleet of snowy clouds sailed high in a sky of tender blue. It was always worth living through the bleak winter and drowned spring on the Chicago Plain, just to see summer return and reign in a peaceful beauty which lasted until the first snowfall.

No heart could harbor forebodings on such a

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sparkling spring day; and Mrs. Kinzie was busy and happy, for in the tiny settlement the arrival of a new baby was an event over which every one rejoiced. It was not until late in the afternoon that Doctor Van Voorhis, the army surgeon, left a wee stranger in the Burns cabin and, getting into his canoe, paddled down to the fort. Then Mrs. Kinzie was in a quandary. The little one had not been expected quite so soon, and Mr. Burns had gone out to Mud Lake with the soldiers. To leave her sick friend to the care of a half-breed bound-girl was not to be thought of. But she herself should be going home, for the narrow path which wound along the marshy bank was dangerous after nightfall. So she ran out to look for the returning boat.

The sun was going down behind the ridge. Then, for a long moment, she thought her eyes must be deceiving her, for it appeared to be setting again, on the prairie below the ridge. The lifted bank of trees was hidden by smoky clouds, and up from the low horizon suddenly flickered and sprang and spread a crimson glare, shot with tongues of orange flame. It was a fire! In an instant of horror

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she knew that only the cabin, the stable, the cattle-sheds, the rail fences and haystacks of Lee's Place, all burning at once, could make such a conflagration. Indians!

She started to run toward the trading-post to give the alarm—turned back. The Burns cabin lay in the path of those savages, should they come down the river. She had almost reached the door again when Little John, stark naked, his clothing in a bundle on his neck, his slim white body gleaming with slimy water and all in a tangle of weeds, scrambled up the bank from the river.

"Little son! My little son!" she cried, as she knelt and tore away those strangling wire-like weeds, and helped him into his homespun shirt and buckskin breeches. "What has happened? Where is Helmie?"

"He and the soldier stayed to round up the horses and cattle after dark. Most of 'em had been rafted across to the oak woods when 'leven Indians came to Lee's Place. They were chuck full of firewater and all painted up and yelling like devils. We cut and run for the canoe, where Helmie had left the guns, and got away. We heard shots. I guess they killed Mr. Lee's

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men and then set fire to everything. Helmie told me to run home, and warn the Burns family first of all." He had run four miles, and then swum that sluggish flood, ice-cold, thick with mud, paved with sink-holes!

"The weeds—the weeds! They might have pulled you under and drowned you!" She kissed her small hero in a passion of pain and pride and tenderness. He was shivering from the chill and nervous excitement, but he held himself as taut as a bowstring, and he was ready for the next duty. Herding the Burns children before him, Little John started for the trading-post.

Mrs. Kinzie and the half-breed girl carried the mother and baby to a mattress on the river bank. In the growing dark the fire was seen from the fort. The crashing sound waves of cannon-shots spread like thunderous waters over the marsh. Startled wolves and dogs began to howl, herds of deer to run. The sick woman screamed for her husband in peril, and then fell into a dreadful moaning.

"That was to warn Mr. Burns and the soldiers out on Mud Lake not to start home, but to take refuge in the Miami village," Mrs.

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Kinzie assured her, and she held her hysterical friend in her arms until Dr. Van Voorhis and Ensign Ronan came in a boat to take her and the infant to the fort. As there was not room for two more passengers, Mrs. Kinzie led the girl across the marsh to Ouilmette's cabin, and left her with the voyageur's squaw. No Frenchman or his Indian family would be molested.

It was entirely dark now, but she could see the flitting lights in the numerous buildings of the trading-post, and was stumbling toward them over grassy hammocks and into boggy holes, when she heard her husband shout her name. "Here, John." She stood still and guided him with her steady voice, until he came to her and swung her back into the beaten path. She hurried so that her words came in gasps.

"Helmie thought—from the way those Indians—were painted—that they were Winnebagoes."

He stopped in the light which streamed from the store, and held her away from him that he might read her real feeling. "That is what Captain Heald will prefer to think. But, beloved, be brave. They may have been Pottawottomies disguised."

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"Not our good friends!" she cried. "They would defend us."

"The chiefs will protect our family even at serious risk to themselves. If I wasna sure of that I would take you and the children to Detroit at once. You are not afraid?"

"No, my darling. I am not in the least afraid for the children or myself." She gazed at him steadily, with the sweet, undaunted look of that unforgettable day when he had lost his heart to a captive maiden on the Genesee. They never discussed the matter again. "But the other people, John—the garrison!" It was a paralyzing thought. The Winnebagoes were not numerous, and they dwelt far to the northwest, around the Four Lakes of Wisconsin; but the Pottawottomies were everywhere between them and Fort Wayne and Detroit. If they were hostile, escape would be cut off, relief for the little fort barred to any force which was likely to be sent.

"That's it. I must stay here, not only to protect our property, but to do but I can to restrain the fury of the Indians when war breaks out. Black Partridge himself admits that some of his unruly braves may have had a hand in

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this attack. Captain Heald has been letting Mr. Irwin sell whisky, guns and ammunition to treacherous young savages all winter. Indeed, I think he has sold little else, for my business has been about as good as usual. And only this morning the agent boasted to me that he would have seven thousand dollars' worth of furs to take to army headquarters in Detroit. You must go to the fort to-night, dear heart, just on the chance that those Indians were of a distant tribe. Peggy and Little John have already taken the children."

As they looked back upon that time they thought it was then that they took farewell of their home, although the family returned to it the next day and lived there undisturbed for the next four months. The feast was spread in the dining-room, the piazza festooned with cedar and juniper, and set with pine-knot torches for dancing, and candles burning everywhere lighted a festive scene. But the house was already deserted. Clerks were barring the windows and padlocking the doors of all the buildings, and voyageurs were putting the horses and cows in the stable and driving the pack-ponies up to the cow-pasture. As John

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Kinzie launched a canoe from the pier, the Pottawottomie chiefs disembarked to take their turn at standing guard over the property of Shaw-nee-aw-kee during the night.

White as any ghost, but quiet and collected, Peggy was helping Mrs. Lee undress the scared children of the settlement and putting them to bed in her own quarters. Late in the night, when Mrs. Kinzie could leave Mrs. Burns, she found her daughter up in the block-house, from whose loopholes the oak woods along the South Branch could be seen by day, staring out into the blue darkness with tragic eyes.

"Peggy darling, are you sorry I brought you out here? I need not have done so. When I married again your father's people wanted me to send you to Scotland."

"No, dear mother, you must never think that. If you hadn't brought me I should never have had Helmie. I am going out with Captain Wells at dawn to help find him. Every one will try to stop me, so you must help me. Yes, I'm afraid, but I'm going. O Mother of God, let me find him alive, unhurt!" She collapsed in a piteous heap against a small cannon to pray. But when she had wept

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away the sharpest of her grief and fear she said, simply: "Your father and mine were brave soldiers, and I am a soldier's wife. Darling mother, don't ever try to stop me. I am going through every peril by Helmie's side."

Mrs. Kinzie herself slipped down to the military storeroom and smuggled out the smallest-sized soldier's uniform she could find. In that disguise, and in the fog which had drifted in from the lake, the lady who was afterward known as the heroine bride of the Fort Dearborn massacre slipped through the gate with the relief party. It was noon when she reappeared, helping her young husband and the soldiers drive down Mr. Lee's horses and cattle.

The Indians had fled. Ensign Ronan took armed troops up the river to bury the horribly mutilated dead on Lee's Place, and to fetch Mr. Burns and the soldiers down from Mud Lake. The Kinzies returned to their home the same day, but when Mr. Irwin took his furs to Detroit—where they were seized by the British when they captured that town in August—the Lee and Burns families moved into Cobweb Castle, under the guns of the fort.

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News was received in June that General Hull's army had reached Detroit in safety. Captain Heald was not alone, then, in his renewed feeling of security, for along a border which stretched from Cleveland to Vincennes farmers returned to their work in the fields. But to John Kinzie this period of calm was the lull before the storm. When his store managers came in with their canoe fleets and pony-pack trains of pelts, he sent Chandonnai up with his furs, consigning them to an English company in Mackinac to guard against the chance of their being confiscated, and he sent the men back to their posts to make caches into which his goods could be hurried on the first alarm.

It is incredible to-day that war was declared in Washington in the middle of June, but that Fort Dearborn had no news of it until the 7th of August. Never of any military importance, this far-flung little outpost appears to have been forgotten. Two soldiers sent to Fort Wayne for the mail in July disappeared on the road. Then alarm grew as the weeks went by and the *Tracy* failed to come around from Detroit with supplies.

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It was a hot, dry summer on the Chicago plain. The sun mounted and burned in a cloudless sky above a shrunken, noisome river filled with rotting weeds, and a marsh which turned brown in July. Closely confined to the fort, soldiers were stricken with the heat and sickened of dysentery, until not more than half were able to line up for morning drill. Of this fact the Indians were not unobservant. The Miamis, not wishing to be involved in the war, disappeared from the region; but Pottawatomie braves came and went constantly on indefinite errands, circling the fort with watchful regard, like vultures hovering over a battle-field strewn with the dying.

Chandonnai returned by rowboat long before Mackinac fell to a combined British and Indian attack in July; and Detroit was within nine days of its surrender when a despatch was received from General Hull. And it was brought, not by a soldier, but by a friendly Indian. Chief Winnemeg had come around the village of his own hostile tribe, racing on a United States cavalry horse which dropped dead at the gate. He cried aloud to the guard that he must be admitted at once, for he had

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orders for Captain Heald to evacuate Fort Dearborn and march to Detroit by way of Fort Wayne.

A Pottawottomie brave who had been lying, apparently asleep or drunk, on the veranda of Cobweb Castle, rose to his feet and slouched across the log footbridge which spanned the slough to the west. Slipping behind a sand-ridge, out of view from the fort, he broke into a run across the prairie.

XV

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INSTANT flight, before the Indians had time to gather and agree upon some plan of attack, was the one chance of escape for the garrison and the American settlers of Fort Dearborn. Chief Winnemeg of the Pottawottomies paced the council-room, beat his faithful breast, and flung out his arms in eloquent appeal to Captain Heald.

"White Father, Miamis scared. They no fight for you. Pottawottomies all gone bad. You go quick. Leave flag flying. Leave plenty firewater. Crazy braves come in a week. They find no one. They stop to steal and burn. They get very drunk and fall asleep. You all safe in Fort Wayne."

"He's right," said John Kinzie. "If we delay three days we shall have to fight our way out and all the way to Fort Wayne."

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"You're a lot of old women!" Captain Heald flashed an angry glance around the table at white-faced and silent men. "Would General Hull be talking of invading Canada if he was leaving hordes of hostile savages behind him?"

"He certainly would if he is under the same delusion of the friendliness of the Indians that you are," John Kinzie assured him.

"You can see for yourself whether it's a delusion. He has sent this despatch by an Indian."

"White Father, no soldier could get through. Your mail-carriers were killed on road."

"I will not believe that. They were white-livered deserters."

Mr. Lee broke across the shocked silence with a cutting rebuke, "Those men went on perilous errands on your orders, and their bones may even now be whitening on the trail."

The captain replied coldly: "Discussion of that point is profitless. I also am under orders. General Hull instructs me to call in the friendly tribes and distribute the public property which we cannot take with us among them."

"They'll all be friendly—until they get the goods, and get you into a trap," John Kinzie

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explained with the patience born of despair. It seemed fantastic to be talking at all, and not hurrying—hurrying—from some nightmare of disaster. “General Hull willna invade Canada. The country, East and West, is unprepared for war. The defense of the frontier is a wall of cards.

Dr. Van Voorhis had been studying the official document. “Captain, you are given discretion. You are ordered to evacuate only ‘if practicable.’ Out of ninety men, civil and military here, not more than fifty could make the forced march to Fort Wayne. The rest would have to ride in the wagons with the dozen women and twenty children. There would be seventy-two helpless people to be cared for and protected.”

“It would not be a forced march. We could take our time.”

At this extraordinary assertion John Kinzie sprang to his feet and began to stalk up and down the room in a violent effort at self-control. In trying to speak with the deference due a senior officer, Lieutenant Helm almost choked.

“I agree with Doctor Van Voorhis that we should stay here and risk a siege. We have food

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and supplies to last until spring. By that time General Harrison could surely come to our relief."

"General Harrison will have to relieve Fort Wayne, perhaps Detroit also," John Kinzie declared, with a quiet certainty that sounded like a death knell. "Gentlemen, Fort Dearborn is two hundred miles northwest of the military frontier, which runs from Detroit to Vincennes. God knows why it was ever built and garrisoned at all. But there is a big and growing fur trade here which the English traders covet, and a force of British regulars would probably be sent down from Mackinac to capture this post. To that we could safely surrender."

"That is the counsel of cowardice or disloyalty." In his anger at all this opposition, Captain Heald quite forgot himself. "I believe you were born a British subject."

John Kinzie refused to take offense at this insult. "The British would find it more profitable to take the other view of me—try me for a traitor, and confiscate my property, which is of much greater value than this fort. No, my friend, it is the counsel of despair. And you

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will please keep in mind the fact that I agree with Chief Winnemeg—that we should cut and run. All the devils from hell have been loosed upon us."

But under the strange delusion that the tribes of the region had not been corrupted, which none of his advisers shared, Captain Heald stuck to the decision which led to a tragedy unique in American annals: "Let the Indians come in. I will distribute the goods among them and ask for a friendly escort to Fort Wayne."

Even the unanimity with which the Miamis refused to come in at all, and the rapidity of the arrival of Pottawottomies before messengers could be sent to their villages, failed to arouse in Captain Heald any sense of danger. Within a week six hundred armed braves had gathered, and they brought their squaws, papooses and ponies, for there would be rich loot to carry away. To the request for an escort they agreed with what was afterward characterized as "suspicious alacrity." When, disregarding the appeals of the oldest and wisest of their chiefs, they threw off all disguise and began to indulge in war-dances around their camp-fires,

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John Kinzie begged Captain Heald not to leave the shelter of the fort. All chance of escape was then cut off.

"If you are so afraid of these Indians why don't you bring your own family into the fort, as Mr. Lee and Mr. Burns have done?" the badgered commander asked irritably.

"Because they are safer where they are. Not a warrior has crossed the river besides the chiefs and older braves who camp on my piazza as a guard of honor." Indeed, the Silverman's wife and children could be seen there, or in the shade of the big cottonwood-trees at the rear, at all hours of the day, on the friendliest terms with their red visitors. "Captain," John Kinzie turned at the door as he was going out, and flung up his head in his characteristic gesture, "my trade here is ruined, perhaps forever. Much wilder tribes, from as far west as the Mississippi, will swarm in to harry the border, making it unsafe even for me to remain in this country. I am staying now only in the hope of being of some use to the unfortunate people who are trapped in this fort. I expect to die, my wife is willing to die, if needful, in defense of your wife."

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"That is kind of you, Mr. Kinzie," Captain Heald replied with light sarcasm, "but it would be more agreeable to me if you could manage to feel less responsibility for my duty."

The behavior of the Indians was marked by impatience and insolence, as preparation for departure went on within the fort with military correctness and deliberation. Then, on the morning of August 13th there came a gleam of hope to despairing men and women. In a great cloud of dust Captain Wells dashed in over the lake shore trail, with an escort of thirty mounted Miamis. With wild whoops this little band swept through the camps of the startled Pottawottomies and gained the fort. The famous scout exchanged no more than a sentence or two with Captain Heald before he demanded that a council be called. Dark, lithe and bold as any Indian, he glared at the commander when he charged him with incompetence.

"You should have marched out at once—run like the devil. Detroit is besieged now. When it falls Fort Wayne will be surrounded. Chief Logan of the Shawnees, one of General Harrison's Indian scouts, has already taken our

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women and children through the woods to Piqua, Ohio, to be sent down to Dayton. What's to be done now? There is no safe place for you to go. You have no choice but to stay here."

"To rot on this pestilent marsh and starve! I am going to distribute the goods and march out. The Pottawottomies will keep their word." In a loud voice Captain Heald ordered the junior officers to have the goods, which Mr. Irwin had brought over from the agency house, carried out to the esplanade for distribution.

"No, you willna do that!" John Kinzie's voice hardened and rose to tones of authority. With his head tossed high, his legs braced apart, he was not to be shaken from his resolution. "Gentlemen, the stock of the government agent here consisted almost wholly of guns, ammunition, tomahawks, scalping-knives and whisky."

"I must obey my instructions, which were to distribute all public goods that we cannot carry away," Captain Heald insisted, coldly, and under a storm of shocked and angry protest, in which Mr. Lee and Mr. Burns threatened him with violence, he sat unmoved. And then John Kinzie suddenly understood him. A

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man of the highest courage and honor, he was a stickler for military discipline. In the most desperate emergency he would be incapable of acting on his independent judgment. Well, then, to prevent that criminal folly Captain Heald must be provided with new instructions.

In the confusion of furious argument John Kinzie left the room. He returned presently with a paper written on the army letter-head and signed with the name of General Hull. It was an order directing that all the liquor and all of the military stores which could not be carried on the march should be destroyed.

"Where did you get this? The ink is scarcely dry. It's a forgery!" Captain Heald turned white with anger.

"If it is, it's a mighty good one" Captain Wells brought his fist down on the rough table. "I'll swear to it myself and take the consequences." Below the signature he signed his own name, and his rank in the territorial militia, with the large flourishes of the unlettered but forceful man. "There, Captain, if your action is questioned, I reckon that will save your hide."

"Curse your impudence, both of you! Do

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you know the penalty for this, Mr. Kinzie? I must order you under arrest for treason."

"Your order wouldna be obeyed, man. Put it to the test, if you like. If the rest of us can get you to Detroit alive, you may have me court-martialed. I can stand up and be shot, but I canna let any man expose women and children to the bestial fury of doubly armed and drunken savages. I'm through talking! Get out of my way! Come on men!"

He led the mutiny within the fort. That night the powder and shot and broken-up weapons were thrown into the deep well by the sally-port, and the whisky was poured into the river. When the other goods were distributed the next day, a delegation of braves was admitted to the fort to satisfy the Indians that the magazine, arsenal and liquor-barrels were empty. Baffled and suspicious, the savages gathered sullenly around their camp-fires.

Mr. Kinzie went home to raft his horses across to the fort, to be used on the march. The cows and ponies and his stock of goods he divided among his clerks and voyageurs, who would be left with no means of making a

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living. Under the floors of the cabins, Chandonnai and Louis Pirie had cached the silver-chests, furs and the portable valuables from the mansion. There they would be faithfully guarded and defended. In his thirty years' experience in this wild trade John Kinzie had never found a French woodsman who was dishonest or cowardly, though most of them were irresponsible vagabonds. Louis Pirie was in the store, helping him, for he had sold the post on the St. Joseph five years before and brought Louis out to the Chicago River.

"M'sieu John, I get scare pretty soon dat M'sieu Irwin lef' some bad weesky een dat Cobweb Castle cellar."

"Impossible! The man wouldna be such a fool." But the agent had left for Detroit in a great hurry, and the building was dismantled, unguarded since the Lee and Burns families went into the fort.

"I go see, M'sieu John. Any firewater layin' round loose he better be bus' up."

"Oh, certainly. If any is there it should be destroyed. But, *mon brave*, those savages would kill even a Frenchman for that."

Louis shrugged his shoulders. "Every feller

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got to die some tam, by gosh." And then, from his simple creed, he brought forth a reverent theory: "Mebbe *le bon Dieu* He save my feet dat tam you remember, so I go tromp, tromp on dis fine, smart erran' for Heem."

"No doubt about that. I think God has some supreme use and test for us all, and for our souls' sake we darena fail Him."

Louis had just one earthly concern: "M'sieu John, you know dat nice French mamzelle I get marry weeth? Mebbe Madame John she take ver' good care *ma bonne femme*."

"God bless and keep you, *mon frère*. We'll take care of 'Toinette as of our own." There were tears in John Kinzie's gray eyes when he wrung the hand of his faithful voyageur in farewell.

Within a half-hour Louis crossed the river in a canoe. Laughing and joking with surly warriors, he sauntered through the encampment of the esplanade and disappeared into the agency house. The whisky which he poured out on the cellar floor sank at once into the sandy soil as into a sponge, but the fumes rising through cracks in the flimsy structure spread to the camps.

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The nearest braves leaped across the veranda to find the door barred. Rushing to the foot-bridge which spanned the slough, they tore up a log for a battering-ram. When scores of furious savages hurled their weight against the door it gave way with a splintering crash. Louis was captured in trying to escape from a rear door, and flung back into the alcohol-soaked cellar. Then, as those maddened demons poured out, a torch was thrown in. With an explosion like artillery the building burst into flames.

Brave Louis was never buried "all in wan beeg piece"—never buried at all. From that fiery pit his soul went up to *le bon Dieu* in vapor and ashes. Fifteen hundred Indians, flourishing tomahawks, knives and firebrands, leaped and yelled around the burning house until it fell to embers. Then they turned— whooping warriors, shrieking squaws and devil's imps of shrill papooses, and surged around the fort.

Their oldest and wisest chiefs—Black Partridge, Topenebe, Winnemeg and the enlightened half-breed "The Sauganash," were prophets without honor now, hooted at, stoned,

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hustled out of the way. Even then John Kinzie had no fear that the craziest braves would take it into their heads to cross the river, but as a matter of precaution he and Chandonnai stood guard on the piazza. It was after midnight, and that orgy of fury had not yet spent itself, when Black Partridge shot across the dark flood in a canoe.

"Shaw-nee-aw-kee," he shouted from the pier, "you and Princess Nelly and papooses go now. Pottawottomies no hurt you. But Sacs, Foxes, Winnebagoes, come from West, and Piankeshas and Weas from Wabash. They not know you. Topenebe got big Mackinac boat at river mouth. He take you all to his village on St. Joseph. Soon you go to Detroit. Give parole to British White Father you be safe."

"Brother, I accept that offer for my family, but not for myself. I must turn against your people and fight with the men in the fort. Mrs. Helm is our daughter. She goes with her mother."

The chief hesitated. From twelve to sixteen Peggy had been at school in the East. Marrying soon after her return, many Indians did

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not identify the beautiful young wife of Lieutenant Helm as a member of the Silverman's family. She would be a danger to the others.

"Some braves no believe that, Shaw-nee-aw-kee. They think you lie they kill all of you."

"We must risk that. But they all know that Shaw-nee-aw-kee and Princess Nelly never lie. My wife willna go without her," he replied, firmly.

"All right. I do best I can. You come to fort with me now. I got something to give that White Father."

"Presently. Wait there, brother." John Kinzie turned into the house. The big, low-ceiled living-room was already denuded of much of its beauty and comfort, and guttering candles flared in the warm, dust-laden wind which blew in from the south over prairies that stretched unbroken to the Ohio River. Hearing him enter, his wife came from a rear chamber where, to distract her mind from the horror of Louis's death, she had given the stricken 'Toinette the task of watching beside the sleeping children. In an instant his arms were like iron bands around her.

"My darling, Topenebe, Black Jim, and

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Chandonnai are to take you and the little ones to the St. Joseph. I will follow when I can—if I survive. I must go to the fort and march out with the garrison. Captain Heald canna deal with these tribes. There is a chance that Captain Wells or I might save some from the massacre. But if I perish—my wife, you have given me a dozen such happy years that Heaven itself can have no purer bliss to offer."

With hands encircling his head, she pushed back his hair, thickly laced with silver, now, that she might draw his face down to her lips. "And there is another world, my dear."

"I'm sure of that, or I couldna run the risk of parting in this."

There were some practical matters to be talked about. His mother had left him a good house in Detroit, outside the stockade, at the corner of Jefferson Avenue and Wayne Street, so there would be a home. There was money for a year's expenses; Chandonnai could recover valuables here, and after the war accounts due him could be collected from fur-trading companies in Mackinac. They would not be alone again, for the garrison was to march out at nine o'clock in the morning, and

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at the last they all but died and turned cold in each other's arms, so like was this parting to the final dissolution.

John Kinzie had a key to the door which opened from the river bank to an underground passage into the fort. He and Black Partridge appeared suddenly in the open space in the middle, where horses, baggage-wagons and people were crowded in confusion. Men were supporting their fainting wives, and mothers clasping their terrified children. Captain Wells's escort of Miamis had drawn apart to hold a pow-wow around a small bonfire. John Kinzie waylaid the busy scout.

"How about those Miamis? Can you depend upon them to fight?"

"No. There are only thirty of the poor devils, against six hundred Pottawottomies. When the fighting begins, I think they'll cut and run. I shall be killed myself." Growing to manhood in a Miami village, he had absorbed the fatalism of the red man. "But keep your eye on me. I'm going to kill as many of those poisonous snakes as I can before they get me."

Captain Heald was sitting in his office, staring at the wall with the eyes of a dead man, come

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up for judgment of his sins, when Black Partridge laid General Wayne's peace medal, so long and so honorably worn, on the table before him.

"White Father, I can wear this no longer. My tribe will not listen to my words of wisdom. The Pottawottomies will burn the fort. They will take your scalps. They will strew the sands of the trail with your bones. They have been lied to and spoiled with gifts. They will be used for evil and betrayed. I am a true friend of Americans, but I cannot leave my people and wander the earth homeless. And they will need me again when they come to make peace with the Great White Father in Washington."

When he had gone out, Captain Heald got to his feet unsteadily and leaned his weight on the table. A man in his vigorous prime, he seemed suddenly to be stricken with age. He waited there until John Kinzie had brought the leading men in.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I have been blind and deaf to the plainest warnings, but not wilfully so. And I am already punished. The blood of innocents will be on my head. With

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our supplies given away and destroyed, we have no choice but to march out. But having forfeited your confidence, I appoint Captain Wells and John Kinzie to lead you. I will take the rear-guard, the most dangerous place in a retreat. I can at least die for you with a soldier's courage."

"Well said! It takes a brave man to admit that he's been a pig-headed fool." Captain Wells was the first to hold out his hand. "The junior officers will command the troops. Captain Heald and I will divide the Miamis and try to put heart into them. But they'll probably bolt and leave us both unsupported." He clapped the captain on the shoulder, and with a smile raised an imaginary glass: "Here's hoping that you and my cousin Rebecca may live to tell your grandchildren about the massacre of Fort Dearborn. As for me, gentlemen, to-morrow is my unlucky day."

John Kinzie found Peggy with Doctor Van Voorhis and Mrs. Heald in the rough barrack that had been turned into a hospital. The two-score men lying there would have to be lifted on their mattresses into the wagons. She stood so composed, with the soft eyes of a girl on his

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face while he talked, that he was not prepared for her resolution.

"I will go with you now, dear father, to say good-by to mother and the children, but I intend to ride out of the fort with Helmie."

"He willna permit it."

Then, indeed, she drew herself up with that dauntless look of her mother. "He cannot prevent it. He thinks I have no choice in the matter, and I put you under parole not to tell him. Mother understands. If she had no little children, for whom she must live, do you think she would not ride out with you?"

"I admit it. There is no braver blood in America than flows in your veins, my dear. I hope you will live to bear brave sons. America will have need of them." He kissed and embraced her tenderly before he put her into a canoe.

Peggy helped her mother with the hurried preparations for departure. She dressed little Ellen and Marie and two-year-old baby Robert, and made them laugh at some drollery while they ate their breakfast by candle-light. In one of the canoes in which they went down the river she took charge of poor, dazed 'Toinette.

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Half concealed by a small thicket of varying evergreens—fewer than a hundred stunted pines, with cedars, junipers and tamarack—which covered the site of the Art Institute of to-day, lay the big row- and sail-boat. The view to the south, along the lake shore, was thus cut off. But northward, up the stream, it was open. On its little knoll in the elbow of the river, the white fort gleamed in the light of the rising sun; and on the opposite bank the row of sentinel poplars, within the picket-fenced lawn, stood guard over the deserted mansion.

The bugle sounded the reveille. Little John clambered out on the sand to salute the flag. Chandonnai and Black Jim took up their posts on the bank. At half-past eight the colors were hauled down to the merry tatoo of “Little Cock Sparrow.” At that early hour of the morning a long night of desolation was falling on the Chicago Plain.

The chiefs must now return to the Indian camps, and John Kinzie and Peggy to the fort. A golden-haired Aurora, in her gown of saffron-dyed homespun and a floating scarf of violet saranet, the heroine bride fled from heart-breaking farewells to a canoe. Black Par-

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tridge was to take her up to the sally-port which opened on the river. As he stepped into the boat and pushed off, he called back: "Princess Nelly, you wait here all day. Some will come in from the battle. I save your daughter with my heart's blood."

John Kinzie embraced his wife and children. He stood looking abroad over the harbor, on which no fleet would ride at anchor for another generation; over the forking stream shrunk to slime in its gully-like bed, and over the brown marsh which the sun had burned to a copper shield rimmed with tawny woods. But for him that old vision refused to fade.

"There will be another, fairer dawn here. Little John, come back and greet it for your father, if he isna here to see it."

He had lost his hat or forgotten it, and his strong, bright hair blew in the wind. Like the hero of an ancient tale, off on some high adventure and fearful of arriving late, he turned and strode across the sand and up through the Pottawottomie camps to the fort.

XVI

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THE squaws, papooses and medicine-men had kept up the wildest uproar all night, and even the dogs and ponies had been used in mock battles and torturings. But toward morning the braves had retired to the wigwams scattered over the prairie, to make their savage toilets. To the clear note of the sunrise bugle they emerged with faces, arms and bodies painted diabolically in stripes of white and vermillion, edged with black points. Their long hair was gathered into scalp-locks, and their war-bonnets of brilliantly colored eagle and hawk feathers trailed to the ground. Armed with muskets, war-clubs and tomahawks, with their sheathed scalping-knives hanging conveniently from their necks, they began the day with a war-dance. Their leaps and contortions had the swiftness, grace and ferocity

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of wildcats. Howling like wolves, advancing to the rhythmic din of beaten camp-kettles, frothing at the mouth, smeared with dust and sweat, that torrent of painted fiends raged around the fort.

But they were not drunk, and every detail of their behavior, even the sudden subsidence of their fury, was calculated to inspire terror in their intended victims and to mock at their misery. When, at nine o'clock, the main gate was opened wide and the garrison marched out, the six hundred warriors, mounted on prancing ponies, were drawn up as though they intended to keep faithfully to their engagement to act as an escort to Fort Wayne. But at their first glimpse of Captain Wells, who rode at the head of the column, they exchanged furtive glances. The scout, too, had painted his face, but in the symbolic black, not only in premonition of his own death, but also as a notification to these treacherous foes that he meant to sell his life at the highest price. In a mood of sardonic defiance he ordered the band of four musicians to play the "Dead March."

To that dirge the forlorn little procession moved slowly out onto the prairie and down the

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river bank to the lake-shore trail. Fifteen of the Miamis were under the scout's command, and John Kinzie rode beside him. Following the band came Lieutenant Helm with twenty United States regulars, and with his young wife's hand gripping his bridle rein. The Burns family, the Lee children, the wives and little ones of married soldiers, and the sick men were in a long line of clumsy baggage-wagons drawn by army mules. Twelve children, scared speechless and tearless by that night of terror and despair, were huddled on a mound of hay in one wagon-bed. Mrs. Lee, hushing an infant made fretful by the heat, rode beside her husband. Ensign Ronan and Doctor Van Voorhis led another score of troops; and at the rear, with the rest of the Miamis, were Captain and Mrs. Heald, mounted on Kentucky racers which had long been coveted by every Indian in the region.

Yet from that doomed company, whose fighting men were outnumbered twelve to one by the savages, there were brave smiles and the waving of hands in farewell for the more fortunate little group in the Mackinac boat at the river mouth. Every one knew

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that Mrs. Kinzie had no intention of flying from danger and leaving them all to their fate. At serious risk of enraging the Indians against her children and herself, she meant to stay there all day, holding the boat as an ark of refuge for fugitives from the attack.

In breathless agony she watched her husband and daughter ride away, until they were screened from sight by the thicket of evergreens. Very soon the marching column and the host of curveting warriors on its flank were lost in trailing clouds of dust. The tramp of men and animals and the rumbling of the wagons were deadened by the great depth of dry sand. For a little longer that mournful music could be heard. Then in the hush of the hot and windless morning a meadow-lark fluted from the grass, and with a wash of water and a rustle of foam a line of surf broke over the submerged sand-bar.

"Oh, shut your little ears, darlings, and go to sleep!" The words were choked in Mrs. Kinzie's dry throat. During that week of horror she had lived every hour with her babies, amusing them, protecting them from

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alarm. Having grown up in daily associations with friendly Indians, they had looked upon the gathering of the Pottawottomies and such of their savage activities as they had been permitted to see, as upon some spectacle for their wonder and delight. Now they laughed at that mistake, for of course mother meant to say "eyes."

She had Chandonnai and Black Jim set the blanket sail to shade them from the mounting sun. Wakened much earlier than usual, they curled up like kittens on bedding in the bottom of the boat. Toinette, too, exhausted by horror and grief, went to sleep, but Little John stood on guard by his mother.

None too soon were those innocent eyes sealed with sleep, for there came back a sudden muffled beat of hundreds of small, flying hoofs, as though a herd of deer had been stampeded. Chandonnai ran up to the fort, where the squaws and papooses left in the camp had sprung to their feet to gaze southward across the prairie. He returned presently to report that, when only a mile down shore, the warriors had wheeled on their ponies, swept westward across the beach, and disappeared over a low, brush-

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grown ridge—the old shore line—which, with the marshy depression behind it, ran for some miles parallel to the trail. From that ambush the Indians could attack in force from any chosen point.

The silence of another half-hour was shattered by the discharge of six hundred guns at once, by whoops and screams, then scattering shots. Wisps of smoke hung suspended above the trail, and out of that hidden carnage rode Mrs. Heald, her blooded horse skimming the sand like a bird. The Indian in close pursuit on a swift little pony kept up an incessant firing with a pistol, with the intention of disabling the rider and sparing the horse. When she fell forward on his neck the intelligent animal came to a standstill near the fort. Squaws ran down and snatched off her plumed riding-hat and stripped her of her shoes, stockings and cloth habit. But Black Jim pulled her from the saddle, and Mrs. Kinzie and Chandonnai covered his retreat to the boat with pistols.

The squaws shrieked with joy at this futile rescue, for they thought it impossible that the wounded lady could be hidden or long de-

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fended. With a shrug of his shoulders the painted savage mounted her horse. "Her my prisoner. I come get her bime-by." Giving a war-whoop, he galloped away to finer sport that would not wait. Chandonnai cut three balls from Mrs. Heald's arms with his pocket-knife, and Mrs. Kinzie bound the wounds with her table-napkins.

When the battle had subsided to occasional, deliberate shots, as from some shelter gained by the survivors on the prairie, the squaws and papooses swarmed into the fort for loot. They were still busy there in the middle of the afternoon when the Indian returned. Drunk from that orgy of massacre, his eyes bloodshot, he flourished a tomahawk as he lurched toward the boat and demanded his prisoner. But Black Jim and Chandonnai, leaping upon him with a throttling grip, dragged him into the thicket. In ten minutes they ran out for oars with which to dig his shallow grave in the sand. And Little John lashed Mrs. Heald's horse into a gallop, so the coveted animal would not be found in that neighborhood.

All that long afternoon of withering heat, while single distant shots stabbed the silence,

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Mrs. Kinzie cared for her wounded friend, told stories to the children, and played jackstraws with them on a boat seat. At twilight, when the squaws had begun to build cooking-fires to feast their victorious braves, she decided to return to the house. Chandonnai protested. Black Partridge and Topenebe would soon be returning, with news from a small council fire that had been lighted on the prairie west of the battle-field. Then they must set sail for the St. Joseph at once.

"Those are Monsieur's order, Madame John," he pleaded. "Braves from distant tribes may arrive at any moment. It would not be safe to go back to the house."

"No matter. A few, at least, are alive. I cannot go so long as there is a chance of anyone else coming in to be protected. Do not think it, my friend."

The squaws and papooses swarmed down the bank to watch them make a landing, so it was not possible to take Mrs. Heald up to the house without having the fact reported to the returning warriors, nor could anything be done to relieve her sufferings. She had to be left, lying flat under an old blanket, when the canoes

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were shoved under the private pier to keep them from being warped by the sun.

At the moment of the treacherous desertion of the Pottawottomies, Captain Wells had galloped back along the marching column. "Run like the devil!" he shouted. "Make for the big oak-grove on the shore, four miles down the trail. We can put up a good fight there." The horses, mules and ponies, sensing the panic, plunged forward through the heavy sand as the scout raced after the Indians, who had disappeared over the ridge.

Dropping from his trained horse, which followed him below, he fell on his hands and knees and scrambled upward through the brush to the crest. Twice he came down, mounted, tore along the sand, and then went up to sweep the landscape with his field-glass, before he located the murderous band, where they had hobbled their ponies in the depression. The Indians had no intention of letting their helpless prey reach the shelter of the big grove. Not more than another mile had been gained when Captain Wells galloped back.

"Get the wagons under that big cotton-

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wood-tree and everybody jump out behind them. Form, boys, and charge!" As the troops charged up the ridge, the thirty Miamis dug their heels into the flanks of their ponies and scuttled down the trail like scared rabbits. Women and children and dying soldiers were still jumping and falling from the wagons when, with a volley of shots, the Pottawottomies rolled over the crest and swept the defenders aside. Half the soldiers were killed in that first onslaught. Those who survived leaped over the wagons and used them for a barricade. Captain Wells dropped from his saddle with a war-whoop. "Give it to 'em, boys."

Mrs. Heald's spirited horse bolted for the fort. Mrs. Lee's mount was shot from under her, and with her infant she was flung at the feet of her dead husband. Lieutenant Helm struck Peggy's horse with the flat of his sword and shouted to her to escape to the boat. But she had only withdrawn a little, to be out of range of the fusillade of bullets, when an Indian skirting the barrier of wagons dragged her to the ground. Her captor's tomahawk was hurled from his grasp by some unseen person behind her, but it grazed her shoulder

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as she jerked his scalping-knife from its sheath and stabbed him.

Black Partridge caught her as she staggered back from that encounter, picked her up, and running with her across the beach forced her down into the shallow water. The fringing grasses to which she clung were not more than a foot high, and she could not have escaped discovery but for the fact that the tide of battle suddenly turned westward to the prairie.

Ensign Ronan, Doctor Van Voorhis, Mr. Lee and Mr. Burns were all killed in the first charge, and Captain Heald was badly wounded. Captain Wells and Lieutenant Helm rallied the troops and fought from behind the wagons, in which every woman, child and sick soldier who had failed to leap to safety had been tomahawked. Sheltering five children behind them, Mrs. Lee and three of the soldiers' wives crawled on their hands and knees to gather and reload dropped muskets for their defenders.

Captain Wells, rising to take aim over that barricade of slaughtered innocents, began to count his victims: "Five, six—O Lord, let me kill another one before they get me—seven." A bullet clipped his ear; he thrust his

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sword into one reptile who was crawling under a wagon, blew out the brains of another with his pistol, and shouted "Nine!" when a tomahawk put an end to the career of that hero of three border wars.

John Kinzie killed two of the wolfish fellows who swarmed between the wagon-wheels to drag the body of the scout through. But they secured the prize, at last, and the whole pack snarled and fought over it, killing and wounding each other. One tore off the scalp with the black ribbon fastening his hair. They got his medals, his weapons, his riding-boots, his field-glass, and his gold-braided and epauletted uniform. Then they cut his heart from his breast, and sitting on the ground devoured it, thinking to put something of his courage and prowess into themselves.

It was that ghoulish preoccupation which gave John Kinzie and Lieutenant Helm time to gather the women and children and Captain Heald in the middle of a flying wedge of men. Skirting the wagons, they raced to the ridge, beat off a band of warriors in the depression with clubbed guns, broke through, and gained a small brushy grove on the prairie.

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There they lay all day, picking off every Indian who ventured to show his head above the grass. But they knew that they could be surrounded and rushed in the night. Lieutenant Helm had been wounded when, at sunset, John Kinzie walked out of the grove and waved a white handkerchief. Around a small bonfire he made terms of surrender. The captives were to be held for ransom by certain chiefs, or delivered to the British as prisoners of war. The amounts to be paid and the destination of each captive were left to be decided at later conferences.

"Good!" they said. "Shaw-nee-aw-kee, you go. We no want you. We hunt for officers' wives now," for the disappearance of Mrs. Heald and Mrs. Helm had puzzled and enraged the savages all day. For a time a certain warrior had been seen riding Mrs. Heald's horse, but he too had vanished. Binding their prisoners securely and leaving them with a small guard, the warriors started for the fort.

John Kinzie ran back to the battle-field. There, under the enormous cottonwood-tree which, standing at the foot of Eighteenth Street, where the massacre monument stands

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to-day, remained a landmark on that all but treeless shore until after the great Chicago fire, he counted eighty-five of that hapless company. Scalped, mutilated and even dismembered, they were strewn about the sand with dead Indians, wrecked wagons and the carcasses of horses, mules and ponies. He had witnessed Mrs. Heald's flight. Now he turned over bodies in his frantic search for Peggy. With the living still to be rescued, he could not stop to care for the slain. Darkness had come when he left that ghastly scene, where bleaching bones must lie unburied for four years. Racing up the trail to the river mouth, he found the Mackinac boat deserted, but with canoes tied to the oar-locks for the use of refugees; and from the open door of the house, light streamed like a beacon across the prairie.

Black Partridge had not been present at that surrender of the survivors of the massacre. When the warriors scattered to surround the little grove, he had slipped into the brush on the ridge. Once, there, he had seen Peggy come up out of the water and creep to the battle-field. Stooping low, he had scuttled down to her, and told her that her husband and her father were

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alive and safe for the time, and ordered her to return to her hiding-place. Under a burning sun which made a blinding glare on sand and water, she lay half submerged all the long afternoon, her dead-white face and golden hair floating on the surface like a water-lily netted in weeds. Her grip on the tough beach grasses was failing and she was slipping to her death when the chief lifted her. He dashed water in her face and pulled her to her feet.

At his bidding she took his hand and waded out into the darkening lake up to her neck. Sometimes swimming, sometimes walking on the sand-bar, they made their way the long two miles up shore. They, too, saw the empty boat, the canoes, and the light flaring from the mansion. But the camp-fires illuminated the river now, so they could not paddle up-stream nor make a landing without being discovered.

Swimming out across the surf, they rounded the wide mouth of the river and climbed the steep, sliding bank of the sand-spit. In that jungle of cottonwoods, willow whips, and matted cedar and juniper through which they scrambled, Peggy's clothing was torn to ribbons. It was a half-mile up to the bend of the river,

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and Black Partridge dragged her half as far again before he ventured out into the open marsh. Through the long, dry grass they crept on hand and knees to the rear door of the mansion. The chief thrust her into the kitchen and spoke from the darkness.

"Princess Nelly, I save her for you. You hide her now. Strange Indians here. They come search house."

Although Peggy was exhausted and the wound in her shoulder was throbbing with agonizing pain, Chandonnai and 'Toinette rushed her into the wash-house and barred the door. There, by the light of a single candle tented with stretched blankets, her golden hair was dipped into a pot of walnut dye, dried and oiled with bear's grease to make it lie flat in two loose braids from her ears down to her breast. Then her face, neck and hands were stained brown, and her dress burned under the back-log in the kitchen fireplace. Clothed in one of 'Toinette's blue strouds petticoats and gay calico sacques, and bedecked with beads and silver, Ouilmette took her to his cabin.

Within an hour warriors from some distant tribe swarmed across the river. Black

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Partridge, who was standing guard on the piazza, warned them that if one member of Shaw-nee-aw-kee's family was injured he would see to it personally that every one concerned in the outrage was killed. But they did search every building of the trading-post. In Ouilmette's cabin they saw a maiden whom the jolly old voyageur introduced as his half-breed granddaughter on a visit from Green Bay. Apparently a stoic native who ignored this rude invasion of privacy, Peggy, all but swooning from the pain of her hidden wound, sat at the feet of Ouilmette's squaw, absorbed in copying an intricate square of patchwork.

The Indians were no sooner gone from that fruitless quest than John Kinzie staggered up from the pier. Since the arrival of Captain Wells, sixty hours before, he had not slept. Now, spent with fatigue and dazed by horror, he saw nothing beside his wife and the children gathered around her—unharmed, not even frightened, only bewildered by exciting and puzzling events.

"Oh, John, you're alive!" she gasped, in a breathless wonder and joy. "Oh, thank God, you're alive!" All that haunted day of a

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world gone mad she had been seeing him dead.

His hands wandered over her head and face, and down to the little ones who crowded gleefully about him, to assure himself that they were all alive, where death had become the natural state, and life in any one a miracle.

"The Burns family." But he stopped, leaving that dreadful roll of the slain to the recording angel. "Helmie's alive, rather seriously wounded, and a prisoner. So is Captain Heald, and Mrs. Lee and her baby. Thirty-four, altogether, are out on the prairie, captives held for ransom."

"And Captain Wells, father?" Little John, his eyes as big as an owl's, his boy heart bursting with hero worship, crowded in between them.

"I canna speak of that brave man now," he cried. "A hundred years from this time Chicago will take its hat off to his memory." At times, when deeply moved, he spoke of the city to rise on that wild marsh in a spirit of prophecy. His eyes lost something of their staring horror in their vision of the heroic scout who had gone to certain death in a flame of

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sacrificial glory. With an effort he comprehended that both Peggy and Mrs. Heald had been rescued.

"We must get them away at once. I shall want Louis for that work." Before any one could stop him he was out in the kitchen, shouting from the door:

"Hey, there, Louis Pirie! *Attendez vous, mon brave!*" Toinette's scream recalled the first sharp pang he had suffered—swept out of memory by that flood of tragedy. "Oh, my God!" He reeled as from a physical blow. "This infernal nightmare of destruction is driving me mad."

His wife had been leaning on him, but his desperate need was a lash to her courage. "No, my darling, you just need sleep. Chandonnai has a plan. You know how clever he is. Indeed, my dear, it would be better if neither of us were to appear in that!"

He was fast asleep in a rear chamber when the clerks and voyageurs, with their squaws and papooses, began to gather on the river bank to watch the Indians, who were celebrating their victory around the fort. Seeming to catch that contagion of excitement, they got

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up running and wrestling matches. And when a loud-voiced *courieur de bois* boasted that he could beat all competitors in a boat-race, the canoes were dragged out and everybody tumbled in. The Indians stopped their hideous dancing to watch this sport from the esplanade. The boats were paddled up to the fork and then went flying down to the river mouth. In the confusion of the turn there, Ouilmette and his squaw slipped out into the dark lake with Peggy and Mrs. Heald. By sunrise the fugitives were hidden on an island in the Calumet, to be picked up by the family on the voyage to the St. Joseph.

The fort was blown up with gunpowder and burned to the ground the next day. The Pottawottomies then piled the loot on their ponies and squaws, and straggled out over the trails. The departure of the family was delayed, now, by the conferences which John Kinzie and Chandonnai were obliged to hold with the chiefs and responsible braves over the disposition of the captives.

With bands of strange Indians coming in and going out, one of the chiefs and the French employees were usually on guard at the house.

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But on the third morning after the burning of the fort, an alarming report drew every man to the camp two miles out on the prairie. After agreeing to treat their captives humanely, a few vicious young braves had tomahawked all of the wounded as they slept, with the exception of the officers, who were worth many guns and ponies. John Kinzie demanded of the chiefs that the leader of this guilty band should be put to death as an example. By sheer force of his personality he staged a military trial and an execution by a firing-squad.

The French, unable to resist that unique attraction, deserted their posts. Unknown to John Kinzie, his wife and children were alone in the house, with only 'Toinette and a squaw, for an entire morning. Unseen from the council, a band of Weas from the Wabash paddled up the lake shore and into the river. Seeing the blackened timbers of the fort crumpled on the knoll, and enraged at having arrived too late for the battle and a share of the loot, they rushed up to the house. They had come on an errand of death and their faces were painted black.

With her sleeping baby on her arm, Mrs.

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Kinzie rose from her chair. "Sit down, friends, and rest," she said, in the French patois which every Indian in the West understood. "Shawnee-aw-kee and Princess Nelly always have food for travelers." She called the squaw to serve them, but that discreet servitor had disappeared. The smile stiffened on her lips as she turned to lay the baby in his cradle. She and 'Toinette brought in great trays of food for these treacherous guests.

Because of her self-possession, the Indians thought protectors must be within call. But when they had eaten and scanned the deserted landscape, they stacked their guns and tomahawks in a corner of the room. Grinning at her evilly, and making threatening gestures, they began to ransack the house. Tall and broad-shouldered, they were obliged to stoop and to go in single file through a door which led to connecting bedrooms, from which there was no other exit.

In an instant she had 'Toinette out of the house, with instructions to hide the baby and the little girls in a secret cave reached from a box-stall in the stable. Then she looked at Little John.

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"You must be brave, my son, and help mother," she whispered. "They have come to kill us all. We cannot escape, but we can protect the little ones for a time. And if help does not come we must kill as many as we can before—"

"Like Captain Wells." The heart of that little knight of the wilderness swelled with valor and pride when she gave him important things to do.

"Make no noise in taking those guns and tomahawks out. Push them under the piazza floor. Hurry!"

When the savages reappeared she faced them with a leveled pistol, and behind her Little John was loading another. They dropped their plunder, and the one in the doorway stood as though petrified.

"I will kill the first one who comes through that door, and the next and the next. I'm a dead shot." She backed away to the wide entrance. Seeing a Pottawottomie topping the rise on which the fort had stood, she fired an alarm in the air. There was an answering whoop from the river. It was the tall, half-breed forest chief, "The Sauganash," who leaped into the house.

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"How now!" he shouted angrily. "Why do you come here with your faces painted black? Shaw-nee-aw-kee is the Indians' friend. You have no need to steal, for the Princess Nelly will deny you nothing. You cowardly wolves, has she not welcomed you to her house and fed you?"

They explained with sudden humility that they had come from a skirmish in the woods and wanted white cloth in which to bury their dead.

"Well, take it and clear out. Go down to the lake in your boat, leaving one brave to follow with your weapons. And tell every band you meet that the Pottawottomies will know how to punish any rascals who molest the family of Shaw-nee-aw-kee."

Not until long afterward did John Kinzie hear of that episode. When he returned to the house the strange band was gone and "The Sauganash" was loafing contentedly on the piazza and gossiping with the children. The Silverman had still to face months of peril in these wilds, and his wife decided that he was not to be disheartened by anxiety for his family. And then everything was in the bustle and confusion of departure.

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"We are off for the St. Joseph at once," he announced. "Topenebe and Chandonnai are getting the boat out of the river. Brave lady, I canna go on to Detroit with you. I must come back to rescue what property I can, and to get the French traders in the region to join me in advancing the ransoms for these captives."

"But, John, the Pottawottomies are leaving for Fort Malden and the siege of Fort Wayne. This country will be full of strange Indians who will try to kill you!"

"I will be disguised as a Miami and will live and travel with that tribe when I can—will take every possible precaution. But, my ain wife, I must come back. That doesna admit of argument." He held her from him that he might look upon her who had never lost the sweet, undaunted look of the maiden he had wooed and won on the Genesee. "Little-ship-under-full-sail, you are a stanch craft to have weathered this storm of war."

As they boarded the Mackinac boat in the harbor the clerks and voyageurs launched their canoes from the pier. They were going down the Illinois River to seek employment with

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French traders at Peoria Lake and St. Louis. Before winter they would return for their families. Then the deserted buildings of the trading-post, huddled before the blast on the frozen marsh, would be the only sign that this bleak and lonely shore had ever been inhabited. For the snow would lie deep on the ruins on the fort and of the scattered bones of those who had perished in the massacre. And for them only the stormy lake, breaking over the sand-bars, would sing its wild requiem.

XVII

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WHEN John Kinzie reached Detroit, coming in over the old Sauk trail in January of the next year, he was reassured for the moment by the sight of the Cross of St. George waving above the fort. On that ravaged frontier the flag of England was now the only symbol of law and order, and under its sheltering folds hundreds of Americans had sought protection. In the comforting belief that his family had found safety here in the camp of the enemy, and asking nothing more for himself than the privilege of being with them and of working at his trade, he stopped at the fort to give his parole to Colonel McKee, the British Indian agent.

But when the officer of the guard at the gate had taken his name, his place of residence in the town, and his business, he called an orderly

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and instructed him to conduct this prisoner across the river, to army headquarters in Sandwich, Canada, and deliver him to General Proctor.

"You have misunderstood. I am a civilian and canna be held as a prisoner of war," John Kinzie protested.

"General Proctor will decide your status," was the curt reply. He looked suspiciously at the Silverman's laden ponies, which were led by Pottawottomies from the St. Joseph, and at "The Sauganash," who rode beside him. "You will be asked to explain how you happen to be traveling in this conquered territory with a friendly Indian escort. We do not tolerate any tampering with our allies."

That aroused the wrath of the half-breed chief. "You no own me. I do what I damn please," he shouted insolently. "We help Shaw-nee-aw-kee get his silver goods and tools from Chicago River. You clear out. Him go see that White Father when I get ready."

To John Kinzie's amazement that British officer dropped his overlordly manners and stepped aside with an apology. "Oh, all right, Chief, if you are responsible for him."

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This incident filled him with alarm. The British military authorities here had lost control of the Indians! A perilous situation had developed out of the fact that England had a total of only twenty-five hundred troops in Detroit, Sandwich and Fort Malden, and her hope of holding this region depended upon the fleet on Lake Erie and upon the five thousand red warriors gathered under the banner of Tecumseh. There were now many desertions from the ranks of the savages, for General Harrison, having relieved Fort Wayne, was gathering an army at Fort Meigs, which he had built at the rapids of the Maumee, and was raiding the Indian towns of the Ohio border. The braves were worried about their own ill-defended homes, and few of them were anxious to meet the great Indian-fighter on the field of battle. General Proctor's weak policy of conciliation and non-interference with their savage excesses had completed their demoralization. They were boldly using Detroit as a center from which to conduct their murdering, thieving and kidnapping raids.

The town, which was crowded with soldiers, Indians and refugees, had a squalid, disorderly

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aspect. The civil population had just been reduced to a state of terror by the massacre of wounded and disarmed American prisoners on the Raisin River. With swaggering braves boasting of that exploit in the streets, they kept to their houses or hurried timidly on necessary errands. Even on the ungraded roads outside the stockade, that were deep with the muddy slush of an open winter, brawling Indians flaunted their bestial vices and displayed unchecked a savage ingenuity in crime.

More than a little alarmed about his family now, John Kinzie hurried forward through the chill of early dusk, past the rude timber houses which were scattered over the prairie. When still a block from the one that was now their home, he saw his wife fling the door wide and run down to the picket gate to waylay a squaw. The most degraded creature he had ever looked upon, her gray witch locks streaming in the wind, was leading a white boy by the rope with which his hands were tied behind his back. She was beating him with the knotted end to make him dance on his bare, half-frozen feet, and shrieking with glee when he cried out in agony.

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"Wait—please! I'll find something better!" Mrs. Kinzie cried when the squaw refused the ransom of a point-lace collar with scorn. In turning to run back to the house she collided with the gaunt, travel-worn husband from whom she had heard nothing in five months. But she had not a word of welcome or endearment for him, then, only a frantic cry for help.

"A silver brooch, John—something—quick to buy this poor laddie. She'll kill him!" She did not wait for an answer, but rummaged in a pony saddle-bag for a trinket. The boy fainted when John Kinzie carried him into the house.

His family had been living here in a peril almost as great as that from which they had fled on the Chicago River. With every weapon taken from her, and drunken savages rioting all night in the streets, she had a houseful of fugitives and ransomed captives to protect. For weeks Indians had been bringing prisoners in, and she had been buying them with clothing, bedding, cooking-pots and elegant trifles, until the house and family wardrobe were stripped. And from her diminishing stock of flour and pork she

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had fed these unfortunates, as had every other American and old French family of the town.

Encompassed by war, and with no escape for any one from that trap, John Kinzie devoted his days to organizing the rescue and relief work. Until midnight every evening he toiled at his bench, turning the silver dollars and the silver spoons of the people into trinkets, for no other ransoms were so eagerly sought by the Indians as his beautiful ornaments.

He was so busy salvaging the human wreckage of the war that he scarcely noticed when General Proctor took troops and red warriors down the river in April, to attack Fort Meigs. When the expedition returned within a month, the baffled British commander was boiling over with rage. General Harrison had escaped him by slipping away across the Black Swamp to another fortified position twenty miles up the Sandusky River. In this mood he sent a peremptory order for John Kinzie to come to headquarters. He had to hold some one to account for his failure, and the Silverman was a thorn in the flesh, a rebuke and a constant source of humiliation to him.

As he was not asked to sit, John Kinzie stood

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before General Proctor in his characteristic attitude. With his legs braced apart, his hands in his pockets and his head flung up, he looked down upon the British commander whose weakness was responsible for the Raisin River massacre and for the perilous situation in Detroit. In the following October General Proctor fled from the battle of the Thames, where his entire army was slain or captured by General Harrison, and where his brave and loyal savage ally, Tecumseh, was killed. Differential to important Indians, his manner to the Americans under his protection was insulting and often abusive.

"You have a son-in-law who is an officer under Harrison," he asserted, in a way which implied that the fact was an offense.

"Yes, sir—Lieutenant Helm. I tried to persuade the Pottawottomies to deliver him to you as a prisoner of war. Ransomed, and released without conditions, it was his duty to report to the nearest American camp."

"Where, no doubt, he serves your purposes. His young wife, who lives with you, hears from him?"

"She does not. Every member of my family

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is under parole to have no communication with your enemy."

"Ah! An American trader can scarcely have as fine a sense of honor as an English gentleman." As there was no reply to this besides a level stare, he snapped: "Well—what are you thinking?"

"That I have met a number of English 'gentlemen,' in my time, and never before one who was a cowardly boor."

There was a contemptuous shrug. "You may eat your opinion of me with your last breakfast, which is likely to consist of a hemp rope. You're a spy, bribing Indians to act as go-betweens with your silver trumpery."

"I leave the corruption of savages to the British, sir!"

General Proctor paid no attention to that retort, so absorbed was he with his angry fears and so much in need of the relief of talk. "Harrison knows all my plans. He keeps out of my way, and is raiding Indian towns to break the spirit of our allies. He thinks a naval victory on Lake Erie will enable him to land on this shore. A consumptive stripling by the name of Perry is building a squadron at Erie,

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Pennsylvania, behind guns mounted on Presque Isle."

"This is all news to me," but John Kinzie made no attempt to conceal the fact that it was good news.

"You lie! You are not only a spy, but a traitor. You were born in Quebec, the rascally son of a Scotch surgeon in the British army."

"I have been a citizen of the United States since 1796, when the British flag was hauled down in Detroit and Mackinac. Here is my certificate of naturalization."

General Proctor took the paper and, without looking at it, used it to light his pipe. "England does not admit the right of any subject of the king to forswear his allegiance. You have all the rights to which you were born, including the right to be hanged for a spying traitor."

At a signal guards appeared, but before they could clap their hands upon him a band of Pottawottomies, led by Chief Topenebe, broke into the room. "What's this, White Father?" he manded. "You no touch Shaw-nee-aw-kee! We hear about this devil business and come for him."

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The Indians pushed the soldiers about the door aside, and rushed him out of the building. But while waiting for them to launch a boat John Kinzie suddenly turned and strode back into General Proctor's private office.

"For God's sake, man, buck up!" he cried. "You canna believe the foolish charge you have made against me; but arrest me, bring me to trial. Assert yourself, and get control of these savages who insult and defy you. If they should help you win a victory you couldna hold them. There would be such a massacre of defenseless people, who have put themselves under your protection here, as would cover your name with infamy."

"Get out of here, curse you!" It was the snarl of an angry animal.

When he told his wife of that ominous interview, so that she might be prepared for any event, she turned paler than he had ever seen her. "Be a little afraid of him, my dear. You are in his power, and a weak man is apt to be vindictive."

For a time his Indian friends did insist upon guarding him, in his house and on all his comings and goings; but as the military authorities

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appeared to have forgotten him, vigilance relaxed. Then, lured to the deserted King's Wharf one dark evening by a false report of the torturing of a captive, he was seized by marines and hurried down the river to Fort Malden. So far as his family and the mystified Indians were concerned, he simply disappeared. Nothing was heard of him for nearly a year.

Charged with treason, he was never brought to trial for fear of a revolt by the Pottawtomie chiefs. He was kept in solitary confinement in the dungeon of the military prison, with the intention of smuggling him out of the country. But that was delayed indefinitely for, in midsummer, the sailing of supply-boats to and from Niagara was stopped, and the naval vessels used as convoys were ordered into the shipyards of Fort Malden for repairs.

John Kinzie saw them there, for he was allowed a scant hour of exercise every day on the promenade which extended along the Erie shore. Rumors of a coming naval battle reached his ears. Indeed, his guards boasted of the easy victory the British fleet would have over Perry's green-timber squadron and backwoods marines. On the morning of September

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tenth he was hustled rudely from his cell at sunrise. It was General Proctor's brilliant idea to have all the American prisoners lined up on shore to see how Britannia proposed to rule the wave on Lake Erie. Perry had come out, at last, from behind the defenses on Presque Isle. In new paint and canvas, bristling with big guns, gay with flags and ensigns, and with the band playing on the deck of the flag-ship, the schooners, sloops, brigs and gunboats made a brave show. To the salute of cannon, the cheering of the garrison, and the war-whoops of Indians, the fleet sped southward to the cluster of islands which lay off Sandusky.

As long as he lived John Kinzie kept a vivid memory of the hopes and fears and the final elation of that historic day. The immediate fate of his family, of all the American refugees in Detroit, and the future of the Northwest rested on the result of that unequal conflict on the waters of Lake Erie. In his cell at noon he heard the dull reports of the first shots that were fired at Put-in-Bay. For two hours there was a continuous cannonading, then a lull which marked the time when Perry left his shattered flag-ship for the deck of the

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Niagara and brought its powerful battery into action. When the firing began again he was on the promenade, and his guards kept him there beyond his hour, for they were eager to see the fleet come swaggering in with its prizes.

It was nearly four o'clock when two small vessels were sighted. Officers watching through marine glasses from the bastions were stunned when they saw the British sloop *Little Belt* scudding before the wind, with the American gunboat *Scorpion* in close pursuit. Perry had broken the battle-line at three, and sunk or captured every other ship but this. When almost under the cannon of the fort, the last flag of England on Lake Erie was hauled down, and the *Scorpion* sailed away with its prize. That evening Perry sent his famous message. "We have met the enemy and they are ours," to General Harrison. As soon as he could put his doubled fleet in order he meant to sail to the Sandusky River to carry the army of the Indian-fighter across to the Canadian shore.

Fort Malden, which for nearly a score of years had been the fountain-head of corruption of the tribes of the Northwest, was now cut off from Niagara, and could not have been held

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very long against a combined attack from land and water. But it could have been strongly defended for a time, to cripple and delay the enemy and to cover an orderly retreat, so John Kinzie was astonished by the mad haste with which it was abandoned. Burning the fortifications and shipyards, and leaving quantities of military stores behind, General Proctor fled up the Detroit River to the Thames.

From a camp in the woods, to which he and a few other important prisoners had been removed, John Kinzie witnessed that flight and knew that this panic-stricken army was already defeated. And the people of Detroit were safe, for the Indians would crawl to the feet of the victorious Harrison like so many whipped dogs. So he was not tortured with anxiety for his family when he was tied on a horse and hurried away through the dark of a rainy autumn night, over wild forest trails to Niagara-on-the-Lake. Manacled, there, and flung into the foul hold of a sailing-vessel, he was carried to Quebec.

The Stars and Stripes had floated above the fort, and the British prisoners in Detroit, for six months; the Indians of the Northwest had

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spent a winter of poverty and bitter reflection in their ruined villages; General Harrison, his task finished, had resigned and gone home to Vincennes, and the peach-trees were in bloom in the gardens on the prairie, when John Kinzie dropped from a horse at his gate and rushed in upon his startled family. Like Penelope of old, the Princess Nelly ran from her loom to welcome her Ulysses. In defiance of public opinion, she was wearing a gown of pink cotton print, for she had steadfastly refused to believe that any harm had befallen her resourceful man. She perched on the arm of his chair, and the children scrambled over him, to hear the tale of the Silverman's adventures by land and sea.

"At Quebec, I was put on a naval vessel bound for England. There, with armed guards always on duty, my chains were removed and I was allowed the freedom of the deck, although I had refused to give my parole. I told them I'd escape at the first opportunity. So when that war-ship was chased by an American frigate, on the Grand Banks, I waited until our flag was only a mile astern, and coming on, to drop overboard and swim home. The water

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around me was spattered with bullets, but I canna think the English tars were trying sairiously to hit me. The good sports gave me three cheers when I scrambled up a rope to the deck of the frigate."

"What did you do next, father?" Little John hung upon him with eager questions when he paused.

"Let me get my lungs full of free air, my son. How sweet it is to breathe with all that poison blown away. For a half-century—since the days of Pontiac—the Great Lakes region has been throttled by arrogance and greed and corrupted savagery. Now it goes forward." Never had he appeared more vigorous or in more buoyant spirits. With his hands in his pockets he paced the room with his long, free stride, while he listened to intimate news. Helmie had won a captaincy at the battle of the Thames. He was now in the fort at Detroit, and Peggy was a garrison lady where her mother had been twenty years before. Chandonnai had been employed by the government as an interpreter and forest diplomat.

"The engaging rascal has gifts—too good a man to be monopolized by a trader. But what

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am I to do now? He and Louis Pirie were my right and left hands. Well—well—here's Little John growing up. What did I do next, my son? Why I was landed in Boston in mid-winter, in sailor togs, without a penny or a friend, worked my way around to Philadelphia on a vessel in the coast trade, and walked out to Harrisburg. Eleanor, darling wife, there is moss on the headstone of good old John Harris." There was no need of more words, with tears for that dear friend, and with memories of their ardent youth brimming over in their happy eyes. "From his son I got a suit of clothes, a horse, and money to fetch me home." With a boyish laugh he took a Canadian shilling from his pocket. "That's all the siller I have in the world."

"Oh, I want that for a souvenir!" his wife cried. "You old jo John, you shall make me a brooch of it."

"With a little-ship-under-full-sail engraved upon it! What ails these bairns? Two years of war have sobered them! I wouldna wonder if they had forgotten how to dance. If I havena credit enough in this town to buy a violin I can whistle like any blackbird."

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There was a happy and prosperous year for the family in Detroit while in the East and South the war was being fought out. The well-to-do people of the town replenished their stock of silver spoons, and traders who began to rebuild their posts in the woods wanted the Silverman's good ornaments. With the victory of New Orleans and the signing of peace, Detroit began to fill up and then to overflow with population. Men from New York State, Pennsylvania and Ohio appeared to buy long-abandoned farms, and with items of news that were like electric cracklings in the air:

A flood of migration was pouring down the Ohio River; Indiana was seeking admission to the Union, and the tip end of Illinois was seething with new people and ambition. Work on the Erie Canal had been begun. When that waterway was opened the Great Lakes would rival the Ohio as a highway of travel and trade, and Detroit would be the Pittsburgh of the Northwest.

Whenever that statement was made in his hearing John Kinzie shook his head with a smiling certainty. "People and goods always

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go as far as they can by water," he said, "and seek the best land. The Chicago River is the gateway to the limitless prairies of the Northwest."

In that year he collected the several thousand dollars due him in Mackinac, the profits of his last season in the fur trade. He had capital enough to set up a shop in Detroit, through which, with no rival at Fort Malden, the forest trade had begun to flow again. That was the prudent thing for him to do. With the opening of the Erie Canal prosperity would overtake that town, while the Chicago River region could not come into its own for another generation. But his soul was outward bound again. He suddenly dropped everything and went out to the St. Joseph with Chandonnai, to advise the Pottawottomie chiefs on peace terms. Mrs. Kinzie was not surprised to hear from him in Kaskaskia, the old French town sixty miles below St. Louis, which was then the thriving capital of Illinois Territory.

When John Kinzie returned the harvest moon was above the Strait, luring the population of the town out to a water carnival. While the Silverman played "Malbrouck" on his violin, his

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wife paddled the canoe up to a favorite retreat on Belle Isle. On a bank lapped by the ripples and walled about with forest undergrowth he lay on the grass at her feet. And, as on that day of more than thirty years before on an island in the Genesee, he talked with the same zest for life and belief in the importance of his task.

"Eleanor, the strangest thing happened during the war. I had always thought that the first people to settle in northern Illinois must come in over Lake Michigan, but they are coming now from the South. Governor Ninian Edwards sent militia up from Kaskaskia to build a fort on Peoria Lake to protect the old lead-mines of Galena. There wasna any fighting, for the Indians had all gone east, leaving that rich country of wooded bottom-lands and rolling prairies as deserted as the Garden of Eden before Adam. So twelve hundred men scattered over it in exploring parties. A border war will have to be fought before people can settle in the Rock River Valley of the Sacs and Foxes, but hundreds of farmers are now swarming up the Illinois River into the Pottawottomie region immediately behind the Chicago Plain.

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"My dear! Is your dream coming true?"

"Not yet. For many years those settlers must look to St. Louis for a market and a source of supplies. Not a wagon-load of grain could ever be hauled across that ten miles of marsh to the Chicago harbor. But that route is to be opened. Governor Edwards, Pierre Menard, Rice Jones and other public-spirited men in southern Illinois are bombarding President Monroe and Congress with petitions. The fort is to be rebuilt; a new outlet for the river to be cut straight and deep across the sand-spit; great harbor works constructed; and the Pottawottomies have granted a right of way for a canal to connect the Chicago and Illinois Rivers. Those are big tasks, not to be completed before the middle of the century. You and I would never live to see them done."

"But you want to go back, John? You could build up your fur-trading business again."

"That is what I couldn't do. Our home is there, just as we left it, but the branch stores have been destroyed, the boats and ponies stolen, the employees scattered, some of them killed. I haven't enough capital to build that all up again; and conditions are changed. The

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American Fur-trading Company of John Jacob Astor, with headquarters at Mackinac, is penetrating every corner of the Northwest. Its agent, Mr. Crafts, is already established on the Chicago River. Their method is to undersell the independent trader until he is put out of business. I could always make a living by trading my silver ornaments and turning the pelts over to Mr. Crafts. But here in Detroit I could do a wholesale business of supplying traders in the woods." He had been lying on the turf, with his head in her lap. Now he turned his face toward her. "Do you want me to stay here, Eleanor?"

"No—no—you belong out there. But, my dear, you were never meant for small things."

"Oh, small things, large things, what are they? That depends upon one's standard of values. We should never be so well-to-do again, but we could educate the children and our land there would be a rich inheritance for them. And I should have time to serve my day and place. Those who perished in the massacre are still unburied. We knew them all. Our neighbors and friends cry to us from the ground!"

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"We could not leave that task to strangers. We must go back, John, and fence in a bit of sacred earth on that wild prairie."

"That isna a little thing. Our days would be full. With no public house to lodge or feed travelers, there will be wayfarers to be entertained. The fort will need an honest store-keeper. The Government will need an interpreter and unofficial adviser. The Pottawatomies will need a friend; and by and by, when civil rule is extended from Peoria, a justice of the peace will be needed, to marry young people back of the ridge and to settle disputes. John Harris did all those humble, unprofitable tasks for Harrisburg. He nurtured an infant community which no one else loved enough to cherish. He was rooted in the soil of the Susquehanna Valley—only a little more a part of it, now that he is dead, than when he was alive. It's like that with me. The Chicago River region is my ain country as you are my ain wife. I canna do anything else but love you both forever."

As she bent her head to kiss him, happy tears suddenly flooded her blue eyes. "Oh, John, I'm homesick, too. When can we go back?"

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"In the spring when work on the new fort is begun. A sailing-vessel will be making two trips every season, now. You and the bairns could go around in comfort, by water.

"No. Cornplanter peopled the woods with wonder and delight for me. I want to share that with the children. Let's all go through the Michigan forests together by the old Sauk trail."

"I canna feel that way about the woods," he said, as they went down to the boat hand in hand, "but I can understand it. The Chicago Plain was clothed in magic for me before I ever saw it. A city will rise there, and spread across that wild marsh like a spring flood. I shall never see it, but I shall have had the best of it—the vision, the adventure."

THE END

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